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Textbook for Class VIII

Modern English



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Modern English

Textbook for Class VIII

NASIRUDDIN KHAN



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Publisher's Note

THE National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been preparing and publishing school textbooks and other educational material for children and teachers. These publications are regularly revised on the basis of feedback from students, teachers, parents, and teacher educators. Research done by the NCERT also forms the basis for updating and revision.

This book is based on the National Curriculum Framework for School Education – 2000 and the syllabi prepared in accordance with it. The Executive Committee of the NCERT, in its meeting held on 19 July 2004, discussed all aspects related to the quality of textbooks and decided that the textbooks of all subjects should undergo a quick review. In pursuance of this decision, the NCERT constituted 23 Quick Review Committees to examine all the textbooks. These committees identified various errors of conceptual, factual and linguistic nature. The review process also took note of the evaluation of textbooks undertaken earlier. The exercise has now been completed and the errors identified have been corrected. We hope that this revised edition will serve as an effective medium of teaching and learning. We look forward to your suggestions to enable us to further improve the quality of this book.

New Delhi
January 2005

SECRETARY
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Preamble

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC** and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

Acknowledgements

A Note for the Teacher

THIS textbook for Class VIII, based on the new syllabus in English for the upper primary stage, is intended for learners who started the study of English as a subject in Class I. It contains ten prose pieces and seven short poems. Each unit consists of a text followed by a variety of activities calculated to aid understanding and appreciation of the text and to help learners improve their capacity for the use of language both in its spoken and written forms.

The thematic range presented through stories, descriptions, dialogues and poems is in line with learners' life experiences, interests and immediate environment, and seeks to inculcate in them desirable values and attitudes. Environment and social and interpersonal relationships are in focus in all the pieces. Problem solving and inferential and evaluative comprehension leading to critical thinking has been preferred to storing up information for its own sake. The book is suitably illustrated for better comprehension and sharper visual appeal.

Activities relating to comprehension, vocabulary and composition constitute an important part of each lesson. These should be done largely orally before well-formulated answers are put down on paper. Footnotes for teachers, wherever they come, are merely suggestive of a possible method and style of presentation and teachers should feel free to innovate and improvise. The language work covered in each lesson is to be reinforced by relevant items given in the corresponding worksheet in the Workbook. It is expected that teachers will supplement these exercises by devising new ones along similar lines. Discussing related topics, performing communicative tasks and undertaking mini projects should be encouraged so that learners get an opportunity to go beyond the book to cover hitherto undiscovered vistas of knowledge and aesthetic pleasure.

We look forward to users' comments on the book on a continuing basis.

CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part IV A (Article 51 A)

Fundamental Duties

Fundamental Duties – It shall be the duty of every citizen of India —

- (a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- (b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;
- (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;
- (k) who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

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CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part III (Articles 12 – 35)

(Subject to certain conditions, some exceptions and reasonable restrictions)

guarantees these

Fundamental Rights

Right to Equality

- before law and equal protection of laws;
- irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth;
- of opportunity in public employment;
- by abolition of untouchability and titles.

Right to Freedom

- of expression, assembly, association, movement, residence and profession;
- of certain protections in respect of conviction for offences;
- of protection of life and personal liberty;
- of free and compulsory education for children between the age of six and fourteen years;
- of protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.

Right against Exploitation

- for prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour;
- for prohibition of employment of children in hazardous jobs.

Right to Freedom of Religion

- freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion;
- freedom to manage religious affairs;
- freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion;
- freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions wholly maintained by the State.

Cultural and Educational Rights

- for protection of interests of minorities to conserve their language, script and culture;
- for minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Right to Constitutional Remedies

- by issuance of directions or orders or writs by the Supreme Court and High Courts for enforcement of these Fundamental Rights.

Contents

PUBLISHER'S NOTE ... **iii**

A NOTE FOR THE TEACHER ... **v**

1. Past, Present and Future ... **1**

The Mountain and the Squirrel ... **12**

2. A Devoted Son ... **16**

The Arrow and the Song ... **30**

3. All about a Dog ... **32**

Wishing ... **42**

4. The Chess Players ... **45**

The Nightingale and the Glow-worm ... **61**

5. Our Civilisation ... **64**

6. My Grandfather's Bookcase ... **74**

7. A Visit to Cambridge ... **82**

Abou Ben Adhem ... **91**

8. The Summit Within ... **94**

Lucy Gray ... **105**

9. The Great Stone Face—I ... **111**

10. The Great Stone Face—II ... **117**

In Drear-nighted December ... **124**

1

Past, Present and Future

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a number of letters to Indira Nehru when he was in various prisons in the years 1930 - 33. All these letters appeared in *Glimpses of World History* published in 1934. The present piece is an excerpt from the last letter of the series. In simple language the author deals with important issues such as understanding the past and its relationship with the present and the future.

WHAT a mountain of letters I have written! And what a lot of good *Swadeshi* ink I have spread out on *Swadeshi* paper. Was it worthwhile, I wonder? You will say, yes, of course, for you will feel that any other answer might hurt me, and you are too partial to me to take such a risk. But whether you care for them or not, you cannot grudge me the joy of having written them, day after day, during these two long years. It was winter when I came. Winter gave place to our brief spring, slain all too soon by the

partial: biased (in favour of) **grudge:** feel resentful about something ("You cannot grudge me the joy" means 'You will admit that I deserve the joy'.)

summer heat; and then, when the ground was parched and dry and men and beasts panted for breath, came the monsoon, with its bountiful supply of fresh and cool rainwater. Autumn followed, and the sky was wonderfully clear and blue and the afternoons were pleasant. The year's cycle was over, and again it began: winter and spring and summer and the rainy season. I have sat here, writing to you and thinking of you, and watched the seasons go by.

I am not a man of letters, and I am not prepared to say that the many years I have spent in gaol have been the sweetest in my life, but I must say that reading and writing have helped me wonderfully to get through them.

You must not take what I have written in these letters as the final authority on any subject. These letters of mine are but superficial sketches joined together by a thin thread. I have rambled on, skipping centuries and many important happenings, and then pitching my tent for quite a long time on some event which interested me. A prison, with no libraries or reference books at hand, is not the most suitable place in which to write on historical subjects. I have had to rely very largely on the many notebooks which I have accumulated since I began my visits to gaol twelve years ago.

I have given you the barest outline; this is not history; they are just fleeting glimpses of our long past. If history interests you, if you feel some of the fascination of history, you will find your way to many books which will help you to unravel the threads of past ages. But reading books alone

gaol (pronounced 'jail'): prison **rambled**: written or talked freely, not keeping to the subject **fleeting**: passing quickly; lasting only a short time **glimpses**: short, quick glances **unravel**: undo a knot by separating threads; solve/understand clearly

will not help. If you would know the past you must look upon it with sympathy and with understanding. To understand a person who lived long ago, you will have to understand his environment, the conditions under which he lived, the ideas that filled his mind. It is absurd to judge people who lived in the past as if they lived now and thought as we do. We cannot judge the past from the standards of the present. Everyone will willingly admit this. But everyone will not admit the equally absurd habit of judging the present by the standards of the past.

If you look upon past history with the eye of sympathy, the dry bones will fill up with flesh and blood, and you will see a mighty procession of living men and women and children in every age and every clime, different from us and yet very like us, with much the same human virtues and human failings. History is not a magic show, but there is plenty of magic in it for those who have eyes to see.

The old days were days of faith—blind, unquestioning faith. The wonderful temples and mosques and cathedrals of past centuries could never have been built but for the overpowering faith of the architects and builders and people generally. The very stones that they reverently put one on top of the other, or carved into beautiful designs, tell us of this faith. The old temple spire, the mosque with its slender minarets, the Gothic cathedral—all of them pointing upward with an amazing intensity of devotion, as if offering a prayer in stone or marble to the sky above—thrill us even now, though we may be lacking in that faith of old of which they are the embodiments. But the days of that faith are gone, and gone with them is that magic touch in stone.

clime (not used often): country; climate **cathedrals**: churches
reverently: with great respect **spire**: pointed structure (like a cone)

Our age is a different one; it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning. Sometimes the injustice, the unhappiness, the brutality of the world oppress us and darken our minds, and we see no way out. And yet if we take such a dismal view we have not learnt aright the lesson of life or of history. For history teaches us of growth and progress and of the possibility of an infinite advance for man. And life is rich and varied, and though it has many swamps and marshes and muddy places, it has also the great sea, and the mountains, and snow, and glaciers, and wonderful starlit nights (especially in gaol!) and the love of family and friends, and the comradeship of workers in a common cause, and music, and books and the empire of ideas.

It is easy to admire the beauties of the universe and to live in a world of thought and imagination. But to try to escape in this way from the unhappiness of others, caring little what happens to them is no sign of courage or fellow-feeling. Thought, in order to justify itself, must lead to action. People avoid action often because they are afraid of the consequences, for action means risks and danger. Danger seems terrible from a distance; it is not so bad if you have a close look at it. And often it is a pleasant companion, adding to the zest and delight of life. The ordinary course of life becomes dull at times, and we take too many things for granted and have no joy in them. And yet how we appreciate these common things of life when we have lived without them for a while! Many people go up high mountains and risk life and limb for the joy of the climb and the exhilaration that

man/mankind: stands for human beings/humanity **glaciers:** masses of ice (formed by snow on mountains, moving slowly down a valley) **we take too many things for granted:** We assume that they are there and don't even notice them. **life and limb** (*idiomatic*): survival (The risk is so great that one may not survive the expedition.)

comes from a difficulty surmounted, a danger overcome; and because of the danger that hovers all around them, their perceptions get keener, their joy of the life which hangs by a thread, the more intense.

All of us have our choice of living in the valleys below, with their unhealthy mists and fogs, but giving a measure of bodily security; or of climbing the high mountains, with risk and danger for companions, to breathe the pure air above, and take joy in the distant views and welcome the rising sun.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
(1889–1964)
[abridged]

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Discuss

- Take up each of the following items in small groups.
- Let the group discuss the item and arrive at a common answer.
- The groups should then compare the common points with one another.
- Do not write your answers. Speak them clearly.

Mark the right item.

1. The act of writing a pile of letters was worthwhile to the writer to the extent that it
 - (i) enabled him to narrate to his child interesting stories.
 - (ii) brought him closer to her emotionally.
 - (iii) gave him great personal satisfaction.

For the Teacher: **Discuss** stands for discussion of items in small groups, arriving at a common point of view, if possible, and presenting it orally to the whole class.

2. After summer, monsoon is most welcome because
 - (i) it brings autumn in its wake.
 - (ii) it quenches the land's thirst and makes it cool.
 - (iii) it completes the cycle of the seasons.
3. The writer's biggest asset in prison was
 - (i) thought and action.
 - (ii) physical work.
 - (iii) intellectual work.

Write

I. Answer the following questions.

1. (i) What does the writer say about the subject matter and style of his letters?
 (ii) Is his style formal, informal, scholarly or friendly?
2. Everyone will agree that books contain knowledge. Why would reading them alone not help one understand the past?
3. Why is it not right to judge past events from the standards of the present?
4. What, according to the writer, is the main difference between the present age and the old days?
5. What is the most important lesson of history? Quote the appropriate sentence from the text to answer this.
6. "Life is rich and varied..." What examples of its richness and variety are given in the lines that follow this statement?
7. Write 'True' or 'False' against the statements given below.
 - (i) A life of thought and imagination is admirable and complete. _____
 - (ii) Thought is useful if it leads to action, which means being involved with people. _____

For the Teacher: **Write** stands for writing well-formulated answers or compositions. This pattern will apply to all the activities given at the end of each lesson.

8. In what way can danger be "a pleasant companion"?
9. (i) All of us make our choices in life. What are the two choices suggested?
(ii) How is one different from the other?

II. Complete each of the following sentences taking its appropriate parts from both the boxes. The first one is an example.

1. These letters of mine _____
These letters of mine *are but superficial sketches joined together by a thin thread.*
2. If you want to know the past _____
3. History is not a magic show _____
4. The days of faith are gone, _____
5. History teaches us _____
6. People avoid action _____

A

- and gone with them
- of growth and progress
- because they are afraid of the consequences
- are but superficial sketches
- you should look upon it
- but there is plenty of magic in it

B

- for those who have eyes to see.
- joined together by a thin thread.
- is that magic touch in stone.
- for action means risks and dangers.
- with sympathy and understanding.
- and of the possibility of an infinite advance for man.

WORDS IN USE

Words are often used in such a way that they call up an image or a picture. Creation of word pictures is a regular feature of literary texts, particularly poems. Here is a simple example from the text:

What a mountain of letters I have written!

In a **literal** sense, 'mountain' is in no way related to letters or the act of writing, but it indicates an enormous size or shape. The word here evokes the image of a very big pile of letters. The use of the word is **metaphorical**.

- I. Now examine the italicised words/phrases in the following sentences. What is the image that each one evokes? What does the image show? The first one is an example.
 1. Winter gave place to our brief spring, *slain* all too soon by the summer heat.
(*It suggests death by killing. It shows two parties hostile to each other, in this case spring and summer.*)
 2. ... *pitching my tent* ... on some event which interested me.
 3. ... books which will help you to *unravel the threads* of past ages.
 4. ... as if offering *a prayer in stone or marble* to the sky above.
 5. the *empire of ideas*.
 6. their joy of the life that *hangs by a thread*.

For the Teacher: 1. The main point of the exercise is to give children a chance to infer associative meanings of words and phrases and to describe the images that they evoke. The example given will make the point clear. 2. 'pitching the tent'—one may mention a traveller, lonely places, adventure, final destination, etc.; 'unravel the threads'—knitting, working hard to solve a mystery, creating something, etc.; 'empire of ideas'—ideas as rulers, an empire without boundaries, supremacy of mind, etc.

II. Complete the following sentences with the appropriate forms of the words given in brackets.

1. The teacher told us a _____ story about the origin of the Kumaon hills. (fascinate)
2. Those workers who do not participate actively in the activities of the trade unions can also be _____ to the cause. (sympathy)
3. He is nervous. We should all _____ him to rise to the occasion. (courage)
4. There was tight _____ for the leader's visit. No one was allowed to cross the road. (secure)
5. It is exhilarating to listen to _____ music when you are feeling low and listless. (devotion)
6. Keep a _____ eye on him. He is too smart to stay in one place. (watch)
7. We were _____ surprised to find him on our side. We thought he belonged to the other team. (pleasant)
8. A good judge decides a case without _____. (partial)

III. 1. Notice the use of 'letters' in this sentence:

I am not a *man of letters*.

(*I am not a great scholar. My profession is not reading and writing.*)

Now study its other uses:

- Pandit Nehru wrote a large number of *letters* to his daughter.
- Fill in your answers in capital *letters*.
- Do you know what a *dead letter* means?
It means (i) a rule that is generally ignored,
(ii) an outdated custom or issue, and
(iii) a letter whose sender and
addressee cannot be found.
- An efficient learner will carry out her/his teacher's
instructions *to the letter*. (paying attention to
every detail)
- Follow the rule of the road *in letter and spirit*.
(Follow it strictly and fully. You know why you
are following it.)

2. Look up the various uses of *match* and *play* in the following dictionary entries. Write sentences using the words in different ways.

match¹ /mætʃ/ *n* 1 [C] game in which individuals or teams compete against each other; contest: *a football, 'wrestling, etc match* • a 'boxing match of twenty rounds. 2 [sing] ~ for sb; sb's ~ person equal to sb else in skill, strength, etc: *He's no match for her (in tennis).* • She's his match (ie as good as or better than him) when it comes to chess. 3 marriage: *She made a good match when she married him.* 4 [sing] (a) ~ (for sb/sth) person or thing combining well with another: *The new curtains are a perfect match for the carpet.* (b) ~ (of sb/sth) person or thing similar or identical to another: *I've found a vase that's an exact match of the one we already have.* 5 (idm) **find/meet one's match (in sb)** meet sb who has as much skill, determination, etc as oneself, and perhaps more: *He thought he could beat anyone at tennis, but he's met his match in her.*

match² /mætʃ/ *v* 1 [I, Tn] (a) combine well with (sth), esp in colour: *The curtains and the carpets match perfectly.* • These curtains won't match your carpet. • (fig) a well-matched couple. (b) be like or correspond to (sth else): *a brown dress and gloves to match.* 2 [Tn] find sth that is like or corresponds to (sth else): *Can you match this wallpaper?* 3 [Tn] (a) be equal to (sb): *No one can match her at chess.* • The two players are well-matched, ie roughly equal in ability. (b) find (sb/sth) equal to sb/sth else: *Can you match that story?* ie Can you tell one that is equally good, amusing, etc? 4 [Tn, pr] ~ sb/sth with sb/sth find sb/sth that fits or corresponds to sb/sth else: *We try to match the applicants with appropriate vacancies.* 5 (phr v) **match sth/sth against/with sth/sb** cause sth/sb to compete with sth/sb else: *I'm ready to match my strength against yours.* • Match your skill against the experts in this quiz. **match up** be in agreement; tally: *The two statements don't match up.* **match sth up (with sth)** fit sth (to sth else) to form a complete whole: *matching up the torn pieces of the photograph.* **match up to** sb/sth be a good as or equal to sb/sth: *The film didn't match up to my expectations.*

play¹ /pleɪ/ *n* 1 [U] activity done for amusement, esp by children; recreation: *the happy sounds of children at play* • the advantages of learning through play • His life is all work and no play. 2 (sport) (a) [U] playing of a game: *There was no play/Rain stopped play yesterday.* • The tennis players need total concentration during play. (b) [U] manner of playing a game: *There was some excellent play in yesterday's match.* • They were penalised for too much rough play. (c) [C] (esp US) action or manoeuvre in a game: a good play • a fine defensive/passing play. 3 [C] work (written to be) performed by actors; drama: *a radio play* • a fine edition of Shakespeare's plays • She has just written a new play. • act/take part in a play. • We are going to see the new play at the Playhouse. 4 [U] (scope for) free and easy movement: Give the line more play, eg in fishing. • a knot with too much play, ie one that is not tight enough. • We need more play on the rope. 5 [U] activity; operation; interaction: *the play of supernatural forces in human destiny.* 6 [U] light, quick, constantly shifting movement: *the play of sunlight on water.* 7 [U] taking part in card-games, or board games, roulette, etc when playing for money; gambling: *lose £500 in one evening's play.* 8 [sing] turn or move in cards, chess, etc: *It's your play,* ie You are the next to make a move. 9 (idm) **bring sth into play** cause sth to have an influence: *This financial crisis has brought new factors into play.*

play² /pleɪ/ *v*

► DOING THINGS FOR AMUSEMENT 1 (a) [I, Ipr, Ip] ~ (with sb/sth) do things for pleasure, as children do; enjoy oneself, rather than work: *There's a time to work and a time to play.* • play with a ball, toy, bicycle. • a little child playing with his friend. • children playing for hours in the garden. (b) [Ipr no passive, Tn no passive, Tg] ~ (at) sth / ~ (at) doing sth (esp of children) pretend to be sth or do sth for amusement: *Let's play (at) (being) pirates.* • The children were playing at keeping shop. 2 [Tn, Tn, pr, Dn, n no passive] ~ sth (on sb) trick sb for amusement: *play a joke/prank/trick (on sb).* • They played a rotten trick on me.

► TAKING PART IN A GAME 3 [I, Ipr, Tn, Tn.pr] ~ (sth) **with/against** sb; ~ sb (at sth) take part in a game; compete against sb in a game: *play football, cricket, chess, cards, etc.* • *playing* (darts) **with** one's friends. • *She plays (hockey) for England.* • *On Saturday France play(s) (Rugby) against Wales.* • *Have you played her (at tennis) yet?* 4 [I, Tn] gamble at or on (sth): *play at the roulette table.* • *play the casinos* • *play the stock-market*, ie buy and sell shares, etc to make money. 5 (a) [Ipr, Tn] take (a particular position) in a team: *Who's playing in goal?* • *I've never played (as/at) centre-forward before.* (b) [Tn, Tn.pr, Cn.n/a] ~ sb (as sth) include sb in a team: *I think we should play Bill on the wing in the next match.* • *Who shall we play at/as centre-forward?* 6 (a) [I, Ipr, Ip, Tn, Tn.pr, Tn.p] (in sport) (try to) strike, kick, throw, etc (the ball, etc), esp in the specified manner or direction: *She played (at the ball) and missed.* • *In soccer, only the goalkeeper may play the ball with his hands.* • *He played the ball onto his wicket*, ie accidentally struck it so that it hit the wicket. (b) [Tn] (in sport) make (a stroke, etc): *Play a fast backhand volley.* 7 [I] (of a sports pitch, etc) be in a certain condition for playing: *a pitch that plays well, poorly, etc*, ie allows the ball to move easily, slowly, etc. 8 [I, Tn] (a) move (a piece) in chess, etc: *She played her bishop.* (b) put (a playing-card) face upwards on the table in a game of cards: *Have you played?* • *Don't play out of turn!* • *play one's ace, a trump, etc.*

► PRODUCING MUSIC OR SOUND 9 (a) [I, Ipr, Tn, Dn.n, Dn.pr] ~ (sth) (on sth); ~ sth (to sb) perform on (a musical instrument); perform (music): *In the distance a band was playing.* • *play (the violin, flute, etc) (well).* • *play (sonata)*

to an audience. • *play a tune on a guitar.* • *play sb a piece by Chopin.* (b) [I] (of music) be performed: *I could hear music playing on the radio.* 10 (a) [Tn, Dn.n, Dn.pr] ~ sth (for sb) cause (a record, record-player, etc) to produce sound: *Can you play (me) her latest record?* • *Play that jazz tape for me, please.* (b) [I] (of a tape, record, etc) produce sound: *There was a record playing in the next room.*

► ACTING 11 (a) [Tn] act in (a drama, etc); act the role of (sb): *They're playing 'Carmen' at the Coliseum.* • *play (the part of) Ophelia.* (b) [I, Ipr] ~ (to sb) (of a drama) be performed: *a production of 'Hamlet' playing to enthusiastic audiences.* 12 [La, Ln, Tn no passive] behave in a specified way; act as if one were (a particular type of person): *play dead*, ie pretend to be dead in order to trick sb. • *play the politician, diplomat, etc.* • *play the fool*, ie act foolishly. • *play the sympathetic friend, the wronged wife, the busy tycoon, etc.*

► OTHER MEANINGS 13 (a) [Ipr] move quickly and lightly, esp often changing direction: *sunlight playing on/over the surface of the lake.* • (fig) A smile played on/about her lips. • His mind played on the idea of going away for a holiday. (b) [Tn.pr] direct (esp light or water) in a specified direction: *play the torch beam over the walls.* • *The firemen played their hoses on the burning building.* • *They played the searchlights along the road.* (c) [I] (of fountains, etc) produce a steady stream of water. 14 [Tn] allow (a fish) to exhaust itself by pulling against the line. 15 (idm) **what sb is playing at** (usu expressing anger, irritation, etc) what sb is doing: *I don't know what he thinks he's playing at.*

COMPOSITION

The writer says that each one of us can choose either to live in 'the valleys' (safe and secure but with little excitement) or to climb 'the high mountains' (a life of risk and danger but full of excitement). What is your choice going to be in the years to come?

Write a short composition giving your choice of work, your reasons for it and the consequences that you anticipate. Whatever your choice, you should hope to live a happy and useful life.



The Mountain and the Squirrel

Compared with the mountain, the squirrel is much too tiny. But, surely, size has nothing to do with talent. Does the squirrel's small size make it less worthy? The squirrel doesn't think so. Neither do we. Read the poem and see who is a better debater—the big mountain or the tiny squirrel?

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter
"Little prig."
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year
And a sphere.

prig: someone who behaves as if he/she was superior to others **a year and a sphere:** 'Year' refers to time and 'sphere' to space. A situation can be described in its completeness with reference to both time and space. In other words, every detail should be considered in the final assessment.



And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry;
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

(1803-1882)

ACTIVITIES**COMPREHENSION****Discuss**

1. The mountain calls the squirrel "little prig". Does it provide a clue to the cause of their quarrel? Try to guess what they were quarrelling over.
2. Which argument of the squirrel do you appreciate the most, and why?

Write

1. The size of the mountain is a point in its favour. How does the squirrel counter the point? (lines 6 – 9)

2. "And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place."

Which of the following does the squirrel mean by the above lines?

- (i) I do my work without interfering with anyone else's.
- (ii) I am a respectable squirrel.

- (iii) I am what I am, and I am happy to be it.

- (iv) I perform the tasks I am capable of performing honestly and diligently, and I have a dignity of my own.

- (v) I have a place allotted to me, and I occupy it without fear.

Mark your choice(s).

3. "Talents differ."

Which of the following explains it best?

- (i) No talent is identical to another.

- (ii) Not everyone is good at one and the same thing.

- (iii) People have strange characteristics.

Mark your choice(s).

4. Which line in the poem expresses the idea that there is a clear method in the way nature has created the world? Read the line aloud.

5. (i) What is it that the mountain can do but the squirrel can't?
(ii) What is it that the squirrel can do but the mountain can't?

COMPOSITION

- Work in small groups.
- Read the phrases given in the box.
- Read the dialogue using appropriate phrases to fill in the blanks.
- Let pairs of children enact the complete dialogue turn by turn.

silly remarks can you crack a nut no big deal
on your enormous back take care as big as you

MOUNTAIN : Hello, little Squirrel. You look like someone about to do big things.

SQUIRREL : I do whatever I can, though it may not impress big chaps like you. You are always making _____ about me. You are doubtless big, we feel, but that is _____.

MOUNTAIN : Little prig!

SQUIRREL : Now you are sulking.

MOUNTAIN : I'm not sulking. I'm polite and huge.

SQUIRREL : True. I am not _____,

but I'm not so small as a bee.

A bee can fly, and I'm quite spry,

but what makes **you** talk so high?

MOUNTAIN : Now, _____, Miss Squirrel.

SQUIRREL : Don't lose heart so mighty fast. You carry a great squirrel track _____, and thick forests for animals fast and slack.

MOUNTAIN : See! I'm big and wild, dear child, and there isn't much I can't do, either.

SQUIRREL : Well! _____, Big Brother?



2

A Devoted Son

Rakesh is as devoted to his parents as he is committed to his work. An ideal son, surgeon and husband, he comes up in life the hard way. When at the peak of success and fame, he loses his mother and watches his old father going to pieces. How does he balance his professional obligations against his personal duties? Let us find out.

I

THE results appeared in the morning papers. Rakesh scanned them. Then he went up the steps to the verandah where his father sat sipping his morning tea, and bowed down to touch his feet.

“A first division, son?” his father asked, reaching for the papers.

“At the top of the list, Papa,” Rakesh murmured. “First in the country.”

The family whooped and danced. The whole day long visitors streamed into the house to congratulate the parents and to slap Rakesh on the back. They filled the house and

the garden with the sounds and colours of a festival. Rakesh was the first son in the family to go to school and then medical college. At last the fruits of his parents' sacrifice and his own labour had arrived, golden and glorious.

To everyone who came to him to say "Mubarak, Varmaji, your son has brought you glory", the father said, "Yes, and do you know what is the first thing he did when he saw the results this morning? He came and touched my feet. He bowed down and touched my feet." This moved many of the women and men in the crowd and they shook their heads in wonder and approval of such exemplary behaviour. "One does not often see such behaviour in sons any more," they all agreed.

And that was only the beginning, the first step in a sweeping ascent to the heights of fame and fortune. The thesis he wrote for his MD brought Rakesh still greater glory. He won a scholarship. He went to the United States of America where he pursued his career in the most prestigious



ascent: climb/going up **MD:** Doctor of Medicine **prestigious:** reputed

of hospitals. What was more, he came back. He returned to that small yellow house in the shabby colony right at the end of the road. And the first thing he did on entering the house was to slip out of the embraces of his sisters and brothers and bow down and touch his father's feet.

His mother gloated over the strange fact that he had not brought home a foreign wife as all her neighbours had warned her he would. Instead he agreed, almost without argument, to marry a girl she had picked out for him in her own village. She quietly slipped into the household and settled in like a charm and gave birth to a baby boy.

For some years Rakesh worked in the city hospital. He quickly rose to the top position as director and then left the hospital to set up his own clinic. He took his parents in his new car to see the clinic when it was built. He now became known not only as the best but also the richest doctor in town.

However, all this was not accomplished in the wink of an eye. It was the achievement of a lifetime. At the time he set up his clinic his father had grown into an old man having retired from his post at the kerosene dealer's depot at which he had worked for forty years. His mother had died soon after, and it was Rakesh who ministered to her in her last illness and who sat pressing her feet at the last moment—such a son as few women had borne.

It had to be admitted that Rakesh was a devoted son and an exceptionally good-natured man. He had managed somehow to obey his parents and humour his wife and show concern equally for his children, his patients and his friends. He had also emerged an excellent doctor, a really fine surgeon.

gloated: expressed joy and satisfaction over one's own success (used in a derogatory sense) **in the wink of an eye:** very quickly /'in the twinkling of an eye' **ministered:** attended to (like a nurse)

How one man — and a man born to illiterate parents, his father having worked for a kerosene dealer and his mother having spent her life in the kitchen — had achieved, combined and conducted such a range of virtues, no one could understand, but all acknowledged his talent and skill.

Write

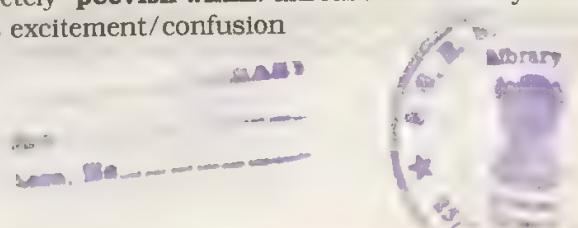
Answer the following questions.

1. Rakesh's success was greater than his father had expected.
How?
2. (i) What was special about Rakesh in the family?
(ii) His great achievement was the consequence of
(a) _____ and, (b) _____.
Find appropriate phrases in the text and fill in the blanks.
3. What pleased Varmaji particularly about his son's behaviour on the morning of the results?
4. Give examples of Rakesh's humility, obedience and professional success after his return from America.
5. What does "a range of virtues" refer to in the case of Rakesh?

II

It is a fact, however, that talent and skill, if displayed for too long, cease to dazzle. Having retired from work and having lost his wife, the old father very quickly went to pieces. He developed many complaints and fell ill frequently. Even his son could no longer make out when it was something of significance and when it was merely a peevish whim. One minute, he sat huddled on his string-bed and the next, stretched out suddenly and lay absolutely still. The whole family flew around him in a flap, wailing and weeping, and

cease to dazzle: lose their charm and attraction **went to pieces:** lost control over himself; was broken completely **peevish whim:** unreasonable annoyance **in a flap:** in a state of nervous excitement/confusion



then suddenly he sat up, stiff and gaunt. And he did this once too often.

It was Rakesh who brought him his morning tea in the old man's favourite brass tumbler. He sat at the edge of the bed and discussed or, rather, read out the morning news to his father. It made no difference to him that his father made no response. It was Rakesh, too, who, on returning from the clinic in the evening, persuaded the old man to come out of his room, and take the evening air out in the garden. On summer nights he saw to it that the servants carried out the old man's bed to the lawn. He himself helped his father down the steps and onto the bed, soothing him and settling him down for the night under the stars.

All this was very gratifying for the old man. What was not so gratifying was the strict supervision of his diet. One day the old man asked his daughter-in-law to make him a dish of *sooji halwa*, and ate it with a saucerful of cream. Soon after, Rakesh marched into the room, not with his usual respectful steps but with the confident strides of the famous doctor, and declared, "No more *halwa* for you, Papa. If you must have something sweet, Veena will cook you a little *kheer*, just a little rice and milk. But nothing fried, nothing rich. We can't have this happening again."

The old man who had been lying stretched out on his bed, weak and feeble after a day's illness, gave a start at the very sound and tone of these words. He opened his eyes and stared at his son in disbelief. A son who actually refused his father the food he craved? But Rakesh had turned his back to him and was cleaning up the litter of bottles and packets on the medicine shelf.

gaunt: weak and haggard (on account of illness) **gratifying:** pleasing/satisfying
start: sudden, quick movement (out of fear or shock)

Halwa was only the first item to be crossed off the old man's diet. One delicacy after the other went—everything fried to begin with, then everything sweet, and eventually everything, everything that the old man enjoyed. The meals that arrived for him on the shining stainless steel tray twice a day were frugal—dry bread, boiled lentils, boiled vegetables. If he called for another helping, Rakesh himself would come to the door, gaze at him sadly and shake his head, saying, "Now, Papa, we must be careful. We can't risk another illness, you know." The old man tried to bribe his grandchildren into buying him sweets. "Run down to the shop at the crossroads and buy me thirty-paise worth of jalebis, and you can spend the remaining twenty paise on yourself. Eh? Understand? Will you do that?" He got away with it once or twice but then was found out. Rakesh came storming into the room. "Now, Papa, are you trying to turn



delicacy: good, delicious food **frugal:** scanty/not lavish

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my little son into a liar? Quite apart from spoiling your own stomach, you are spoiling him as well—you are encouraging him to lie to his own parents. You should have heard the lies he told his mother when she saw him bringing those *jalebis* wrapped up in a filthy newspaper." The old man sighed and lay down in the corpse position. But that worried no one any longer.

There was only one pleasure left for the old man now—visits from elderly neighbours. These were not frequent as his contemporaries were mostly as decrepit and helpless as he, and few could walk the length of the road to visit him any more. Old Bhatia, next door, occasionally came out of his yard, walked down the bit of road and came in at Varma's gate to collapse onto the stone plinth under a tree. If Rakesh was at home, he would help his father down the steps into the garden and settle him on his bed under the tree and leave the two old men to chew betel-leaves and discuss the ills of their individual bodies with combined passion.

"At least you have a doctor in the house to look after you," sighed Bhatia.

"Look after me?" cried Varma, his voice cracking like an ancient clay jar. "He does not even give me enough to eat."

"What?" said Bhatia, the white hairs in his ears twitching. "Doesn't give you enough to eat? Your own son?"

"My own son. If I ask him for one more piece of bread, he says, 'No, Papa, I weighed out the *atta* myself and I can't allow you to have more than two hundred grams of cereal a day'. He weighs the food he gives me, Bhatia—he has scales to weigh it on. That is what it has come to."

"Never," murmured Bhatia in disbelief. "Is it possible, even in this evil age, for a son to refuse his father food?"

Old Varma nodded. "That is how he treats me—after I have brought him up, given him an education, made him a great doctor. Great doctor! This is the way great doctors treat their fathers, Bhatia."

Discuss

1. Was Rakesh obedient and attentive to his ailing father? How do you know?
2. Read the following sentence.

Varmaji was old and unhappy.

Now read these:

- (i) His own son had become his enemy.
- (ii) He feared he would never recover from his illness.
- (iii) He had lost his status and importance in the family.
- (iv) He was too unwell to appreciate the sincerity of the intentions of others.

Which item above, according to you, combines meaningfully with the sentence given at the beginning?

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. Did Varmaji find his son's talent and skill fascinating in his old age? If not, why?
2. What made everyone uncertain about the old man's complaints?
3. What was it in Rakesh's behaviour that greatly surprised and shocked his father one day?
4. What gave the old man happiness in the midst of his unending misery?
5. (i) What did he tell Bhatia about his son?
(ii) Was his complaint justified? If not, why?



III

There was cold comfort in complaining to neighbours and, on such a miserable diet, Varma found himself slipping, weakening and soon becoming a genuinely sick man. Powders and pills and mixtures were not only brought in when dealing with a crisis like an upset stomach but became a regular part of his diet supplanting the natural foods he craved.

The quantities of vitamins and tonics he was made to take were not altogether useless. They kept him alive and even gave him a kind of strength that made him hang on. It was as though he were straining at a rope, trying to break it, and it would not break. It was still strong. He only hurt himself, trying.

In the evening, that summer, the servants would come into his room, grip his bed, one at each end, and carry it out to the veranda, there setting it down with a thump that jarred every tooth in his head. In answer to his agonised complaints they said Doctor Sahib had told them he must take the evening air, and the evening air they would make him take. Then Veena, his daughter-in-law, would appear and pile up the pillows under his head till he was propped up stiffly into a sitting position that made his head swim and his back ache. "Let me lie down," he begged. "I can't sit up any more."

"Try, Papa. Rakesh said you can if you try," she said, and drifted away to the other end of the veranda where her transistor radio blared cinema tunes.

So there he sat, like some stiff corpse, terrified, gazing out on the lawn where his grandsons played cricket.

supplanting: replacing/in place of **jarred:** hurt **agonised:** miserable
blared: played noisily



The sky-blue Ambassador drove in smartly and the doctor, the great doctor, all in white, stepped out. Someone ran up to take his bag from him, others to escort him up the steps. "Will you have tea?" his wife called, turning down the transistor set, "or a cold drink? Shall I fry you some *samosas*?" But he did not reply or even glance in her direction. Ever a devoted son, he went first to the corner where his father sat gazing at some undefined spot in the dusty yellow air that swam before him. He did not turn his head to look at his son.

"Papa," Rakesh said, tenderly, sitting down on the edge of the bed and reaching out to press his feet.

Old Varma tucked his feet under him, out of the way, and continued to gaze stubbornly into the yellow air of the summer evening.

"Papa, I'm home."

Varma's hand jerked suddenly, in a sharp, derisive movement, but he did not speak.

"How are you feeling, Papa?"

"I'm dying," he croaked. "Let me die, I tell you."

"Papa, you're joking," his son smiled at him, lovingly. "I've brought you a new tonic to make you feel better. You must take it, it will make you feel stronger again. Here it is. Promise me you will take it regularly, Papa."

"Keep your tonic," he said bitterly. "I want none—I won't take any more of your medicines." And he swept the bottle out of his son's hand with a wave of his own, suddenly grand, suddenly effective. Rakesh jumped, for the bottle was smashed and thick brown syrup had splashed up, staining his white trousers. His wife let out a cry and came running.

The old man gave one push to the pillows at his back and dislodged them so he could sink down on his back, quite flat again. He closed his eyes and pointed his chin at the ceiling, like some dire prophet, groaning. All around him was hubbub once again, noise and attention.

ANITA DESAI
(b. 1937)

[abridged and slightly modified]

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. (i) Rakesh's father was given more medicine than food. What good, if any, did so much medicine do him?
 (ii) "He only hurt himself, trying." It implies that
 - his struggle for survival was painful to watch.
 - the medicine made his condition worse.
 - he hurt himself, and no one else, trying to survive.

(d) he did hang on with the help of medicine, but his life was miserable.

Mark the right item.

2. (i) What did Rakesh tell the servants to do every evening in summer to help his father?
(ii) Why was Varmaji against it?
3. Give examples from the text to indicate
(i) Rakesh's importance and popularity at home;
(ii) his exemplary devotion to his father.
4. Rakesh had brought a new tonic. What did Varmaji do that upset everyone?
5. The last paragraph suggests the following.
(i) Varmaji regains his status and importance in the family.
(ii) After a prolonged illness, the end has come.
(iii) Everybody believes that Varmaji will recover at last.
(iv) In spite of everyone's best efforts, the inevitable is about to happen.
(v) The patient groans in pain, but the attention he receives pleases him.
(vi) Life is a series of struggles from beginning to end.

Mark the relevant item(s).

Discuss

Say whether the following are 'True' or 'False', and why.

1. Rakesh belonged to a cultivated and prosperous family.
2. Varmaji discussed the morning news with his son with great pleasure.
3. Rakesh's mother was not too sure of her son returning home after his stay in America.
4. Rakesh was unkind when he told his father that his behaviour towards his grandson had been less than perfect.
5. Rakesh owed his achievements to destiny rather than hard work.
6. Varmaji misunderstood his son most in matters of food and medicine.
7. The family did its utmost in taking excellent care of its ailing head.

WORDS IN USE

I. For each italicised item in list A, two or more meanings are given under list B. Mark the right item in each case.

A

1. Guests *streamed* into the house
2. This *moved* many
3. She settled like a *charm*
4. to *humour* his wife
5. in *disbelief*
6. a *frugal* meal
7. she *let out* a cry
8. *stormed* into the room

B

came one after another/ rushed/slipped in
made them change places/ affected them
magic spell/beautiful idea/ inspiration
impress/indulge/joke with believing that it wasn't true/ was unable to believe
scanty/poor/inexpensive
uttered/stifled/released
walked in angrily/loudly/ quietly

II. **Cold**, which is the opposite of **hot**, can be used in a number of ways.

Study the following sentences with 'cold' in each. Discuss their meanings in small groups. You can look up the clues given in the box for help.

1. There was *cold comfort* in complaining to neighbours.
2. I have got *a cold*. I need medicine.
3. Who would want to invite a *cold fish* like him to the party?
4. He got *cold feet* at the last minute.
5. According to the police, it was murder *in cold blood*.
6. Don't give an old friend *the cold shoulder*.
7. He *blows hot and cold* about self-employment as a better choice.

- keep changing one's opinion (about something)
- someone aloof/showing no emotion
- afraid or reluctant to do something
- planned, deliberate and callous
- deliberately treat someone in an unfriendly way
- little or no consolation

III. Fill in the blanks in the following words using **a**, **e**, **o** or **u**. Check your answer by referring to the text.

divisi _ n	m _ rmured	p _ rents	fr _ its
bow _ d	exempl _ ry	b _ haviour	embr _ ces
gl _ ated	ceas _	min _ te	g _ unt
resp _ nse	bl _ red	fr _ gal	asc _ nt

COMPOSITION

Write a letter to a friend describing your intimate relationship with your grandmother, who is very old and often unwell. She tells you stories, but would often prefer to hear one from you. She eats little, and is unhappy about the number of pills she must take everyday. She needs help in coming out of or going into the room. She is a very interesting person.

- Remember that you are writing an informal composition, talking about personal matters and sharing your thoughts with a close friend.
- It's a personal letter. The language you use should be informal, simple but grammatical.
- Use words and phrases appropriate to the idea you want to express.
- Mention date and place on top and write *Your friend/Yours as ever/Yours affectionately* at the end.



The Arrow and the Song

Nothing that we do, think or say is in vain, though we may not guess the consequences immediately. Just as the arrow shot in the air will fall to earth somewhere, so the actions we perform or the thoughts we express will leave their mark, unseen by us.

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

H. W. LONGFELLOW
(1807-1882)

the sight: the eye **breathed:** hummed; sang

ACTIVITIES

Discuss

1. There is nothing apparently common between an arrow and a song. In what ways do they seem alike in this poem?
2. Why do you find it easier to remember a song than a prose piece?
3. Which do you find more enjoyable—songs in your own language or songs in English? Any reasons for your preference?

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. "It fell to earth ..." refers to both the arrow and the song. Which reference is literal and which is metaphorical?

The use of a word or phrase is called **metaphorical** when it indicates something different from (though related in some way to) its literal meaning.

2. In addition to 'fell', which word has been used metaphorically in the second stanza? In what way is its use non-literal?
3. Which phrase in the poem is parallel in meaning to "still unbroke"?
4. (i) Find in the poem pairs of rhyming words.

Example: air – where

- (ii) Write four rhyming words against each word below.

earth _____

song _____

found _____

heart _____



3

All about a Dog

Rules are made for the convenience and comfort of people at large. They are there for all to follow. Sometimes, though, it should be possible to 'wink' at a rule – to mix it with a little goodwill and cheer, especially if its strict application is bound to inconvenience a beautiful Pekinese dog.

It was a bitterly cold night, and even at the far end of the bus the east wind that raved along the street cut like a knife. The bus stopped, and two women and a man got in together and filled the vacant places. The young woman carried one of those little Pekinese dogs that women like to carry in their laps. The conductor came in and took the fares. Then his eyes rested with cold malice on the beady-eyed lap-dog. I saw trouble brewing. This was the opportunity for which he had been waiting, and he intended to make the most of it. I had marked him as the type of what Mr Wells has called the

raved: blew noisily ('to rave' means to speak loudly and wildly about something) **beady-eyed:** with eyes small, round and bright like beads
Mr Wells: H. G. Wells (1866–1946), British novelist

Resentful Employee, the man with a great vague grievance against everything and a particular grievance against passengers who came and sat in his bus while he shivered at the door.

"You must take that dog out," he said with sour venom.

"I shall certainly do nothing of the kind. You can take my name and address," said the woman, who had evidently expected the challenge and knew the reply.

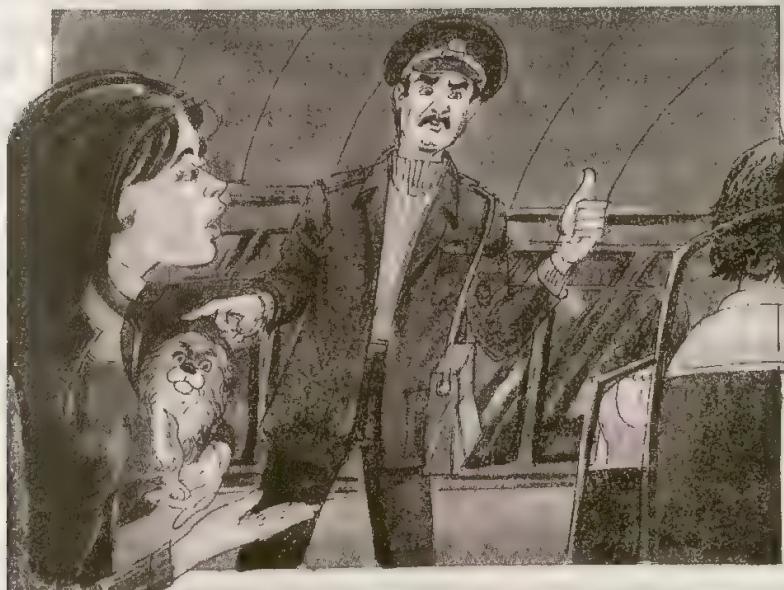
"You must take that dog out—that's my orders."

"I won't go on the top in such weather. It would kill me," said the woman.

"Certainly not," said her lady companion. "You've got a cough as it is."

"It's nonsense," said her male companion.

The conductor pulled the bell and the bus stopped. "This bus doesn't go until that dog is brought out." And he



Resentful Employee: a worker who is full of complaints/grievances
venom: poison (malice/spite)

stepped onto the pavement and waited. It was his moment of triumph. He had the law on his side and the whole busful of angry people under the harrow. His embittered soul was having a real holiday.

The storm inside rose high. "Shameful"; "Why isn't he in the army?" "Call the police"; "Let's all report him"; "Let's make him give us our fares back." For everybody was on the side of the lady and the dog.

That little animal sat blinking at the dim lights in happy unconsciousness of the rumpus, of which he was the cause.

The conductor came to the door. "What's your number?" said one, taking out a pocket-book with a gesture of terrible things.

"There's my number," said the conductor imperturbably.

"Give us our fares back—you've engaged to carry us—you can't leave us here all night."

"No fares back," said the conductor.

Two or three passengers got out and disappeared into the night. The conductor took another turn on the pavement, then went and had a talk with the driver. Another bus, the last on the road, sailed by indifferent to the shouts of the passengers to stop. "They stick by each other—the villains" was the comment.

Someone pulled the bell violently. That brought the driver round to the door. "Who's conductor of this bus?" he said, and paused for a reply. None coming, he returned to his seat and resumed beating his arms across his chest. There was no hope in that quarter. A policeman strolled up and looked in at the door. An avalanche of indignant protests and appeals burst on him. "Well, he's got his rules, you know," he said genially. "Give your name and address."

under the harrow: in great distress as if under a harrow (an implement used in farming) **rumpus:** noise/uproar **imperturbably:** calmly (showing no trace of worry or anxiety) **avalanche:** mass of ice/rock sliding down (far too many loud protests/appeals) **genially:** kindly; pleasantly



"That's what he's been offered, and he won't take it."

"Oh," said the policeman, and he went away and took his stand a few yards down the street, where he was joined by two more constables.

And still the little dog blinked at the lights and the conductor walked to and fro on the pavement, like a captain on the quarter-deck in the hour of victory. A young woman, whose voice had risen high above the gale inside, descended on him with an air of threatening and slaughter. He was immovable—as cold as the night and as hard as the pavement. She passed on in a fury of impotence to the three policemen, who stood like a group of statuary up the street watching the drama. Then she came back, imperiously

beckoned to her young man who had sat a silent witness of her rage, and vanished. Others followed. The bus was emptying. Even the dashing young fellow who had demanded the number, and who had declared he would see this thing through if he sat there all night, had taken an opportunity to slip away.

Meanwhile the Pekinese party was passing through every stage of resistance to abject surrender. "I'll go on the top," said the lady with the dog at last. "You mustn't." "I will." "You'll have pneumonia." "Let me take it." (This from the man.) "Certainly not"—*she would die with her dog*. When she had disappeared up the stairs, the conductor came back, pulled the bell, and the bus went on. He stood sourly triumphant while his conduct was savagely discussed in his face by the remnant of the party.

Then the engine struck work and the conductor went to the help of the driver. It was a long job, and presently the lady with the dog stole down the stairs and re-entered the bus. When the engine was put right the conductor came back and pulled the bell. Then his eye fell on the dog, and his hand went to the bell-rope again. The driver looked around, the conductor pointed to the dog, the bus stopped, and the struggle re-commenced with all the original features—the conductor walking the pavement, the driver smacking his arms on the box, the little dog blinking at the lights, the lady declaring that she would *not* go on the top—and finally going.

"I've got my rules," said the conductor to me when I was the last passenger left behind. He had won his victory, but felt that he would like to justify himself to somebody.

beckoned: called (by making a gesture with the hand or head)
abject: wretched/miserable **remnant:** remaining members
smacking: hitting/striking with open hand

"Rules," I said, "are necessary things, but there are rules and rules. Some are hard and fast rules, like the rule of the road, which cannot be broken without danger to life and limb. But some are only rules for guidance, which you can apply or wink at, as common sense dictates—like the rule about the dogs. They are not a whip put in your hand to scourge your passengers. They are meant to be observed in the spirit, not in the letter—for the comfort and not the discomfort of the passengers. You have kept the rule and broken its spirit. You want to mix your rules with a little goodwill and good temper."

He took it very well, and when I got off the bus he said 'Good night' quite amiably.

A. G. GARDINER
(1856–1946)

DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. "I saw trouble brewing." What did the writer think was going to happen?
2. What impression do you form of the bus conductor? Is he friendly and helpful or aggressive and troublesome?
3. What was the rule about passengers with pet dogs?
4. Who did most passengers sympathise with—the conductor or the lady with the dog?
5. What did the policeman do to solve the problem?
6. (i) What did the lady with the dog do finally?
(ii) What was the result of it?

scourge: beat with a whip; cause (somebody) to suffer **amiably:** in a friendly manner

7. (i) While the conductor and the driver were busy repairing the engine, something interesting happened. What was it?
(ii) What did the conductor do when he discovered it?
8. The writer puts rules into two categories. What are the categories?
9. What advice does the writer offer the conductor about observance of rules in general?
10. How does the conductor take his advice? How does he show his agreement?

Discuss

- I. Who says this to whom? Take each sentence separately and put it in the right context.
 1. "I shall certainly do nothing of the kind."
 2. "What's your number?"
 3. "Give your name and address."
 4. "I've got my rules."
 5. "You have kept the rule and broken its spirit."
- II. Complete each of the following from memory. (Do not refer to the text.)
 1. I had marked him as the type of what Mr Wells has called _____.
(a man with a vague grievance against everything/a man with a particular grievance against passengers/the Resentful Employee)
 2. He had the law on his side and the whole busful of angry people _____. (under the harrow/under his thumb/under the driver)
 3. Two or three passengers got out and disappeared _____. (from the pavement/into the crowd/into the night)
 4. He was immovable — as cold as the _____ and as hard as the _____. (weather/ice/night; word/stone/pavement)
 5. Rules are _____ things, but there are rules and rules.
(important/compulsory/necessary)

WORDS IN USE

I. Rearrange the words in each set below to construct a meaningful sentence. Write the sentences using correct punctuation marks.

1. was/bitterly/night/a/cold/it

2. utterly/that/idea/is/an/useless

3. accident/what/terribly/a/unfortunate

4. is/original/that/remarkably/a/idea

5. different/he/view/a/has/vastly/of the situation

II. Look at these words:

genial	-	geniality
justified	-	justification

The words on the left are adjectives and those on the right are their noun forms. Fill in the blanks with the noun forms of the adjectives given in the following box.

vacant indifferent savage long triumphant

1. She scored a resounding _____ over her old rival.
2. It is your _____ that worries me.
3. There are two _____ for computer experts in our office.
4. It was not the theme but the _____ of the story that put us off.
5. Isn't there a law in this country against treating prisoners with brutal _____?

III. 1. A verb can have more than one noun form. Study the two sets in the table below and write the missing items.

2. Fill in the blanks with the words given in the table.

- (i) The _____ sent by the official _____ has been put into the Reports File.
- (ii) No _____ is worth its name unless it has been _____ by a worthy inventor.
- (iii) A petty _____ committed by a small child cannot be called thieving.
- (iv) Why can't the _____ carry all the passengers in his _____ now?
- (v) A _____ of land claims to contribute to social _____ by designing amazing housing plans.
- (vi) A _____ seen by a holy _____ may not be seen by ordinary people.
- (vii) The _____ is doing his best to improve the work of the institution in all _____.
- (viii) According to my _____, those who call themselves non-believers sometimes also believe.

COMPOSITION

- Read the story again focussing on the argument between the lady with the dog and the bus conductor.
- Write a dialogue between the lady and the conductor. You can change the lines given in the text or write new ones to make the dialogue interesting.
- Use your own words as far as possible.
- Begin like this:

(A cold night. A bus comes to a halt and a group of men and women get in. One lady is carrying a pet dog. The conductor approaches the new passengers to collect fares.)

CONDUCTOR : Good evening. What nasty weather! My fingers are frozen.

LADY : It's bitterly cold. We were wondering if the bus was ever going to arrive. Here is the fare.

CONDUCTOR : Thank you, lady. That's a nice overcoat you have on.

(Then he sees the dog for the first time and forgets the nasty weather.)

LADY : ...

For the Teacher: Group work should precede the writing task. Explain to children the importance of stage directions. Let them enact the dialogue once it is finalised.



Wishing

Don't we often wish things were better than they are? But most of us don't know what to do to make them better. In this poem, the poet offers practical advice as to how the world can be made a better, wiser and happier place.

Do you wish the world were better?

Let me tell you what to do:

Set a watch upon your actions,

Keep them always straight and true;

Rid your mind of selfish motives,

Let your thoughts be clean and high:

You can make a little Eden

Of the sphere you occupy.

Do you wish the world were wiser?

Well suppose you make a start

By accumulating wisdom

In the scrapbook of your heart.

Do not waste one page on folly;
Live to learn, and learn to live.
If you want to give me knowledge
You must get it ere you give.

Do you wish the world were happy?
Then remember day by day
Just to scatter seeds of kindness
As you pass along the way;
For the pleasures of the many
May be oft-times traced to one
As the hand that plants an acorn
Shelters armies from the sun.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX
(1855-1919)

ACTIVITIES

Discuss

1. The title is indicative of
 - (i) what the world is and why.
 - (ii) what it is not and why.
 - (iii) what it should be and how it can be.
2. What is a scrapbook? Do you keep one?
3. Whose image or picture does the last stanza (lines 2-4) bring to your mind?
4. A 'seed of kindness' will grow into
 - (i) a bower of charm and beauty.
 - (ii) a plant of love and compassion.
 - (iii) a shrub of indifference and suspicion.
5. Give an example of how you want to "scatter seeds of kindness" along the way.

ere: before **acorn:** fruit of the oak-tree (Plant an acorn and you get a big shady oak.)

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the three ways in which the world can be made better?
2. What is the first thing to do to make the world wiser?
3. What do you understand by "Do not waste one page on folly"?
4. (i) Consider this:

Some people live to eat, some others eat to live.

- (a) To whom is good food the only objective of life—the former or the latter?
- (b) What will be the objective of the other?

(ii) What difference in meaning do you find between "live to learn" and "learn to live"? Explain it in your own words.

5. 'Many' and 'one' in the last stanza have their equivalents in the lines that come after these words. Find the equivalent words/phrases.

4

The Chess Players



Two friends, addicted to chess, pursue their pleasure against all odds. In the midst of serious social and political disasters, they continue to play chess, indifferent even to their families. Are they selfish, dishonest individuals, or respectable symbols of a decadent society under foreign rule?

I

CHESS is an intellectual game, they say. It improves the players' mind and prepares them to tackle the knotty problems of life. Mirza Sajjad Ali and Mir Roshan Ali spent a major portion of their waking hours sharpening their intellect by playing chess. They were as steeped in the moves on the board as the common people of Lucknow, ruled over by Wajid Ali Shah, were in other acts of pleasure-seeking. The two friends belonged to that category of people who inherit land and wealth from their ancestors, and don't need to do anything to earn a living or deserve their inheritance. The

knotty: difficult; puzzling

friends, therefore, had infinite leisure to improve the quality of their mind, forgetful of the multi-layered decadence that plagued the society as a whole.

Every morning after breakfast the chessboard would be set and 'mock' battles would start. Noon, afternoon, evening and dusk passed unnoticed much as the messages from the inner apartments announcing lunch, tea and dinner. The patient cook, losing his patience at last, would bring food to the room where the friends sat playing.

Nothing was more unpopular in the household than Mirza's passion for chess. Even the servants believed that the game was an ominous disease that would slowly but surely ruin the life and property of those who succumbed to it. The bitterest critic of the situation was Mirza's wife who hated his friend more than chess and nicknamed him 'Mir, the Spoiler'. Mirza, in sheer self-defence, would put the blame squarely on Mir Roshan Ali.

One day Mirza's wife had a severe headache, or so she thought. She asked the maid, Hirya, to go to Mirza and ask him to send for medicine from the family physician. Mirza was absorbed in an intriguing position of his queen, and told the maid to go away and wait for him indoors. The Begum was furious. She ordered the maid to go right back and fetch the master, or else she would herself proceed to the physician. When the maid brought the ultimatum, Mirza was just about to inflict a crushing defeat on Mir Saheb, and would not hear of headaches and physicians.

"Why can't she wait for a while?" he flared up.

decadence: decay. **ominous:** suggesting that something bad is going to happen/threatening. **succumbed:** surrendered/yielded. **intriguing:** unusual and fascinating. **his queen:** king, queen, knight, bishop, rook and pawns are chessmen (pieces on the chessboard). **inflict:** cause (a blow, penalty, etc.) to be suffered by somebody. **flared up:** burst into anger.

"You had better go and check," said Mir. "Women are rather touchy in these matters," he suggested. His humanism would surely help avert an impending checkmate. Mirza knew the cause of his concern.

"You don't want to lose this game, do you?" he retorted. "I am not moving till I have defeated you."

"Don't be so sure of yourself, Mirza. I have a special move in reserve that will upset all your plans. But I won't play. Attend to your wife first," Mir was adamant.

Mirza was compelled to forgo the pleasure of hearing himself say 'checkmate'. He went in to find his wife seething in anger and nearly abusing the game and the wretched players, especially Mir Roshan Ali, the Spoiler, the Home-Wrecker. "Drive away that devil from my door," she thundered. "Hirya, go to the drawing room and bring that filthy chessboard here. Tell that man Mirza Saheb will not play chess any more. He had better leave at once," she rattled off in one breath.

"Come on, dear! Don't be so harsh on him. He is senior to me in age and stature. Do be reasonable," Mirza said meekly.

"Nothing doing!" declared his wife. She moved towards the drawing room and peeped in. Luckily, Mir was not in the room. Having manipulated the position of a couple of pieces to his advantage he was pacing outside looking innocent and unconcerned. Suddenly he heard some commotion in the room and saw chessmen flying out of the window. He concluded that it was time to go home. The Begum bolted the door from within and returned to where her husband was waiting sheepishly. She said, "If that man comes here

avert: avoid; dodge **impending:** about to happen **checkmate:** a move (in chess) that traps the king (When the king is trapped, the game is lost.)
seething: boiling (very angry) **manipulated:** adjusted/changed (in his favour)
commotion: noisy confusion **sheepishly:** (feeling) foolish and embarrassed



again, I will have him turned out the same minute. Will you now go to the physician or not?"

Mirza left the house obediently. Instead of going to the physician's, he went to Mir's house and told him all. His friend was a man of practical wisdom. He offered his drawing room as a safe haven, and advised Mirza affectionately to stand on his dignity and be a shade stiff with his wife. Mirza was greatly impressed by his friend's deep common sense and deeper commitment to the cause of chess.

Write

I. Answer the following questions.

1. The two friends played chess all the time because
 - (i) they wanted to sharpen their minds.
 - (ii) they had nothing else to do.
 - (iii) they wished to be away from home.

Mark the right item.

2. The society in those days was
 (i) developing.
 (ii) directionless.
 (iii) decadent.

Mark the item that does *not* apply.

3. Why was Mirza unpopular in his household?
 4. What made Mirza's wife very angry one day?
 5. What did Mirza's wife do to get rid of Mir for ever?
 6. What was the new arrangement agreed to by Mirza and Mir after the unfortunate episode?
 II. Complete the following sentences using the appropriate parts of the sentences given in the box.
 1. Mirza and Mir spent most of their time
 2. Mirza's servants believed
 3. When the maid came to fetch Mirza
 4. Mir had changed the position of some pieces
 5. Mir's practical wisdom

- he was too engrossed in the game to notice her.
- and was pacing outside looking innocent and unconcerned.
- improving their minds through chess.
- impressed his friend deeply.
- that his passion for the game was an incurable disease.

II

Mir's wife had nothing in particular against her husband's passion for chess. On the contrary, Mir's absence from the house would give her ample opportunities to indulge in her favourite pastime—standing at the door and watching the happenings outside. The new order of things, however, combined with incessant demands for betel-leaves and

sweets and snacks curtailed her liberty of movement and peeping-out sessions, and soon she began to be tired of the players' painful presence in the house.

The servants, used to a slothful existence, also found the new system tough and complained to the Begum accordingly. They were worried, they said, about the gossip in the neighbourhood. The signs were ominous, they whispered, and the master's reputation, property and life were at stake. But they were helpless; so was the Begum. The household, by common consent, had fallen on evil days.

The condition outside the household was no better. There was utter confusion in the whole country. People were robbed in broad daylight, and the inefficient administration did nothing by way of catching the culprits. The wealth of the villages was being diverted to the cities and wasted over hot pursuits of worldly pleasures. The debt to the East India Company was mounting. The Resident warned the King, who refused to move out of his pleasure-house.

For months the two friends went on playing chess in Mir Roshan Ali's drawing room. They would plan new conquests of kings and castles on the chessboard. Sometimes, in the course of their play, they would quarrel and reproach each other, and the play would be stopped abruptly. After a good night's sleep, they would be together in the drawing room as if nothing had ever happened.

One day, when the two friends were deep in the intricacies of the game, something did happen to disturb their peace of mind. A military officer on horseback came round asking uncomfortable questions concerning the whereabouts of Mir Roshan Ali. The servants were instructed to tell the officer that the master was not at home.

curtailed: curbed; reduced **slothful:** lazy/ idle **at stake:** in danger
reproach: rebuke; criticise **intricacies:** complexities

"Where is he, then?" shouted the officer.

"I don't know," replied the servant. "But what do you want?"

"Nothing," said the officer. "Your master is an estate-holder. He must be ready to go to war, if necessary. The King wants to see him. I have orders to conduct him into the presence of His Majesty." And the officer went away.

This was enough to put the fear of God into Mir and Mirza. Summons from the King! Real battlefield! My God! What to do! There was only one way of escaping this—find a place where no military officer could track them down. Yes, there was an old and deserted place in the wilderness beyond the river, Gomti. A better place for playing chess in peace had not been created.

Every morning the two friends would set out for the new destination. On reaching there, they would spread a rough and ready carpet they carried with them and begin their play of the day.

Before long, they would be completely lost in the world of make-believe. They would stare at chessmen silently, and play tirelessly. Once in a way, they would go to a baker nearby for a hasty meal and rush back to resume the unfinished business of the last game.

The political condition of the country was going from bad to worse. The Company's forces were marching towards Lucknow. The inhabitants were rushing to the villages near by. The city was plunged in chaos. But the chess players remained unconcerned. They would return home at night through the bylanes, lest any officer in the King's army should notice them and enlist their services against their wishes.

make-believe: fantasies/things imagined **enlist:** obtain

One day, they were playing as usual in their new hide-out. It was not Mirza's day. He was losing game after game. Just then, a battalion of the Company was heard approaching. The English soldiers were proceeding to Lucknow to show off their authority over the city and its ruler.

Mirza exclaimed, "That's the English army. God help us!"

Mir rejoined, "Let it come. You had better save your queen."

"Come! Let's look at the soldiers. We can watch them from here," Mirza pleaded.

"Wait a minute. One more 'check', and your game is gone," Mir asserted.

"They must be about five thousand strong. They have an artillery too," Mirza refused to concentrate on the game.

"Come, come! I'm far too clever to be taken in by all this. Check!" Mir repeated.

"You are a strange fellow. Think of the calamity that has overtaken our city. How shall we ever return home?" asked Mirza.

"We'll think of that when the time comes. Look to your game. One more 'check' and you will be defeated." Mir was immovable.

The battalion marched past them at ten in the morning. When the gong sounded the hour of four in the afternoon, they heard the footsteps of the English soldiers on their return march. Nawab Wajid Ali had been made prisoner, and was being taken to an undeclared destination. Not a single drop of blood was spilled. Never in the annals of history had an independent kingdom been conquered so swiftly without even a pretence of defence. Was it cowardice or a complete political and moral surrender?

check: a move (in chess) threatening the king

annals: records

calamity: disaster

By then, Mirza had come into form and was winning game after game.

Mir said, "The tyrants have taken away our dear Nawab."

Mirza replied, "Watch my next move."

"Look here, Mirza," Mir said, "I can't play now. The poor Nawab must be shedding tears of blood." Mir was on the point of losing this game too.

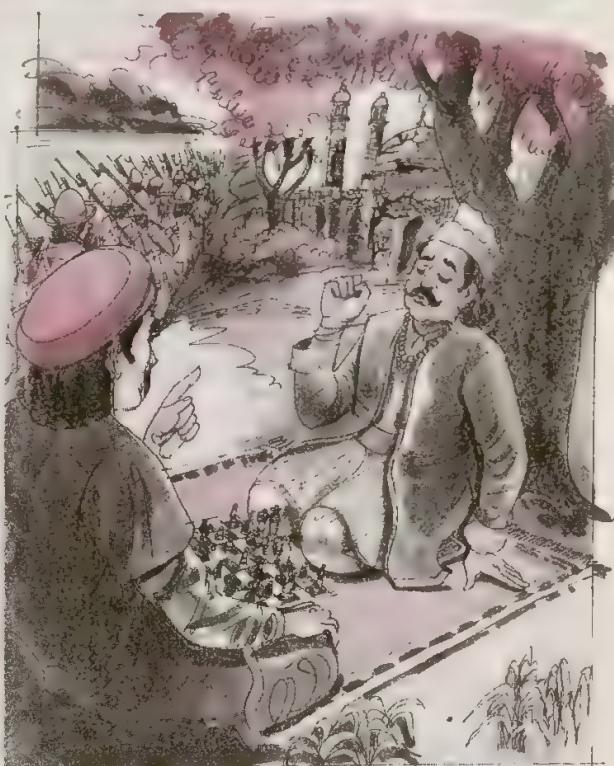
"This is natural," Mirza said. "The Nawab must be worried. Aren't you? Watch my next move."

Mir sighed, "What a dreadful thing to have happened! No one is happy for ever."

"That's true. You yourself are in serious trouble now. How do you plan to save your king now?" Mirza boasted.

"What a heartless fellow! Even a calamity like this cannot move him," Mir said more to himself than to his friend, who had already made the fatal move trapping Mir's king.

The English soldiers and their prisoner passed out of sight. Mirza, jubilant over his exceptional form, mockingly said, "Come, let's pray for the peace and welfare of the Nawab." Mir's sorrow had by now been drowned in his defeat and he was impatient to seek his revenge.



jubilant: very happy

Write

I. Answer the following questions.

1. Mir's household found the new order of things tiresome.
 - (i) What was his wife's problem?
 - (ii) What did the servants say?
2. What compelled the two friends to find yet another hideout for playing chess?
3. Which place did they choose, and why?
4. Mirza took keen interest in the soldiers moving towards the city.
 - (i) What were his comments about the soldiers?
 - (ii) Why was he interested in them?
5. The same afternoon Mir was equally keen on the battalion on its return from Lucknow.
 - (i) What had the soldiers done that Mir wanted to discuss?
 - (ii) Why did Mirza find his story boring?

II. Write 'True' or 'False' against each statement.

1. Mir's wife disapproved of her husband's passion for chess.

2. The social circumstances then, were similar to the condition in Mir's household.

3. When the military officer came to Mir's house, Mir was elsewhere playing chess.

4. The friends set out for their new destination every morning carrying a carpet, the chessboard and packets of food.

5. The English soldiers went past the ruined mosque in the morning and returned the same way in the afternoon.

III

Evening had set in. The bats clung to the ruined walls upside down and the birds roosted in their nests. Mirza and Mir were playing chess with the proverbial zeal of two warriors thirsting for each other's blood. Mirza had lost three games in a row. It was now his fourth the prospects of which were far from rosy. He played cautiously, but one faulty move would spoil his chance of success each time. With every defeat his desire for revenge became more intense. On the other hand, Mir was humming lustily as if he had come by a hidden treasure. This incensed his friend all the more. Now they were quarrelling over trifles.

"Sir," Mirza said angrily, "don't change your positions so frequently. Play intelligently. Let go of that piece. Don't touch any piece till you have decided your next move. See! You have done it again. Keep it back where it was."

Mir's anger was roused as he feared a reversal if he listened to Mirza. "I haven't made my move yet," he said.

Mirza said, "You had your chance. Keep back the piece there."

"Why? I never let it go."

"You are wasting time, Mir Roshan Ali."

"It is you who are making a row. Victory or defeat is a matter of luck. You can't win through trickery or quarrelling."

"Well, you've lost the game."

"Why!"

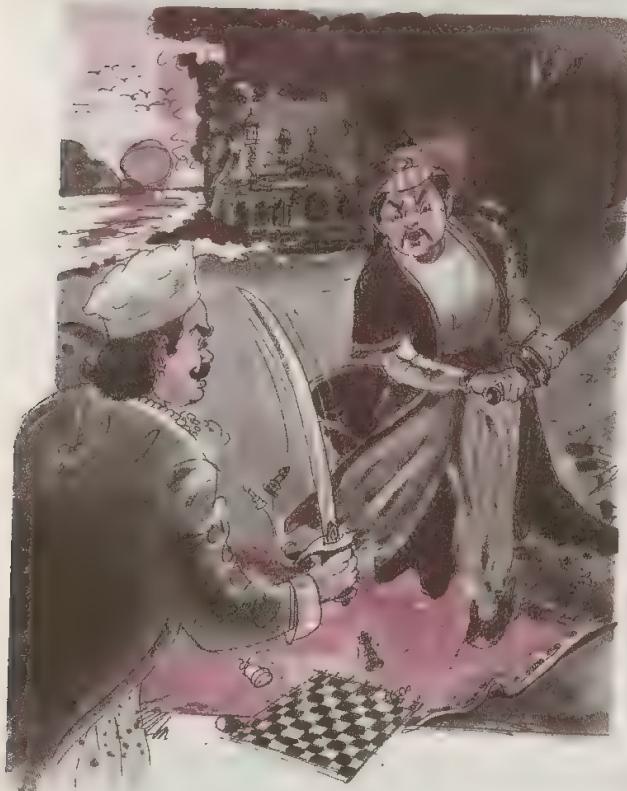
"Because you don't want to return the piece to its original position."

"No, I will not."

"You will have to."

roosted: settled for sleep; perched **come by:** got (by chance) **incensed:** enraged

trifles: small or unimportant matters/points **let go of:** leave



Then Mirza roared, "Your forefathers never played chess. How would you, then, know the rules of the game? Your ancestors were grass-cutters, not chess players."

Mir replied, "It is your forefathers who were grass-cutters. Chess has been in our family for generations."

"You have spent your whole life serving Ghazi-uddin Haider as a cook. You call yourself a noble because he gave you land."

"Don't let me abuse your ancestors. They were cooks. We have always been the companions of the King."

"You are a shameless liar!"

"Behave yourself, or you will come to grief. I won't let an underling like you call me names."

"Come on, then, and fight a duel."

"Well, I'm not going to let you off so easily."

They drew their swords. The nobles in those days went about with swords in their waist-bands. The two friends were pleasure-loving but not cowards. They had courage. They were honourable and noble. The swords gleamed in the

underling: an inferior person **call me names:** abuse me **gleamed:** shone

darkness and the sound of their clashing disturbed the dead in the neighbouring graveyard.

Before long both were mortally wounded. They lay dead among the ruins. They, who did not spare a sigh for the captive King, laid down their lives for the illusive honour.

Darkness was thickening. The two kings on the chessboard sat, as it were, weeping over the two dead warriors. The broken arches and the dusty walls stood guard in reverent silence.

PREMCHAND
(1880–1936)
[retold]

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Write

I. Answer the following questions.

1. The two friends had a serious quarrel over
 - (i) their love for the King and the country.
 - (ii) their passion for chess.
 - (iii) their false pride and self-respect.Mark the right item.
2. (i) How did the quarrel turn into a duel?
(ii) What was the result of the duel?
3. (i) Is the general mood of the story one of sadness or happiness? Justify your answer with an example or two from the story.
(ii) Read the last paragraph again. Pick out words/phrases that highlight the mood of mourning.

captive: held as a prisoner **illusive:** based on illusion; deceptive

II. Fill in the blanks with words/phrases given in the following box. (Do not refer to the text.)

in a row upside down set in roosted rosy
prospects thirsting proverbial zeal clung

Evening had _____. The bats _____ to the ruined walls _____ and the birds _____ in their nests. Mirza and Mir were playing chess with the _____ of two warriors _____ for each other's blood. Mirza had lost three games _____. It was now his fourth the _____ of which were far from _____.

WORDS IN USE

I. The phrases on the left occur in the text. To explain their meanings in context, encircle the appropriate word/words in the phrase on the right against each. The first one is an example.

1. multi-layered decadence	come-down at one/ various level(s)
2. in sheer self-defence	merely to justify his own/ friend's action
3. impending checkmate	defeat (in a game of chess)
4. a special move in reserve	about/unlikely to happen a special move already/to be played
5. a safe haven	a safe place of shelter/ retreat
6. a slothful existence	a life full/devoid of action and work
7. by common consent	through general/special agreement
8. plunged in chaos	when everything is in utter confusion/perfect order
9. exceptional form	unusual/routine display of skill in playing the game
10. making a row	being noisy, quarrelsome/ quiet, friendly

II. Five groups are given here. Three members of each group are missing. Find them in the box below.

A**B****C****D****E**

disease

chess

thought

wealth

leisure

symptoms

board

intellect

land

make-believe

inheritance headache rationality game reason

comfort property wisdom pleasure moves

physician manoeuvres estate medicine peace

III. Fill in the blanks in the following words using **ei** or **ea**.

b ___ ver

h ___ ght

conc ___ ve

m ___ sure

l ___ sure

dec ___ ve

h ___ r

f ___ ther

conc ___ l

rec ___ ve

dec ___ se

perc ___ ve

COMPOSITION

Fill in the blanks in each paragraph with the phrases given in the box following it. Then, read all the paragraphs together.

The Gentle Art of Annoying

The worst thing that can happen to a chess player is _____. Because it is so, it is evident, that what the chess public needs is a method of _____ without first mastering _____ of making good moves.

winning easily
the difficult and unnecessary technique
to lose a game

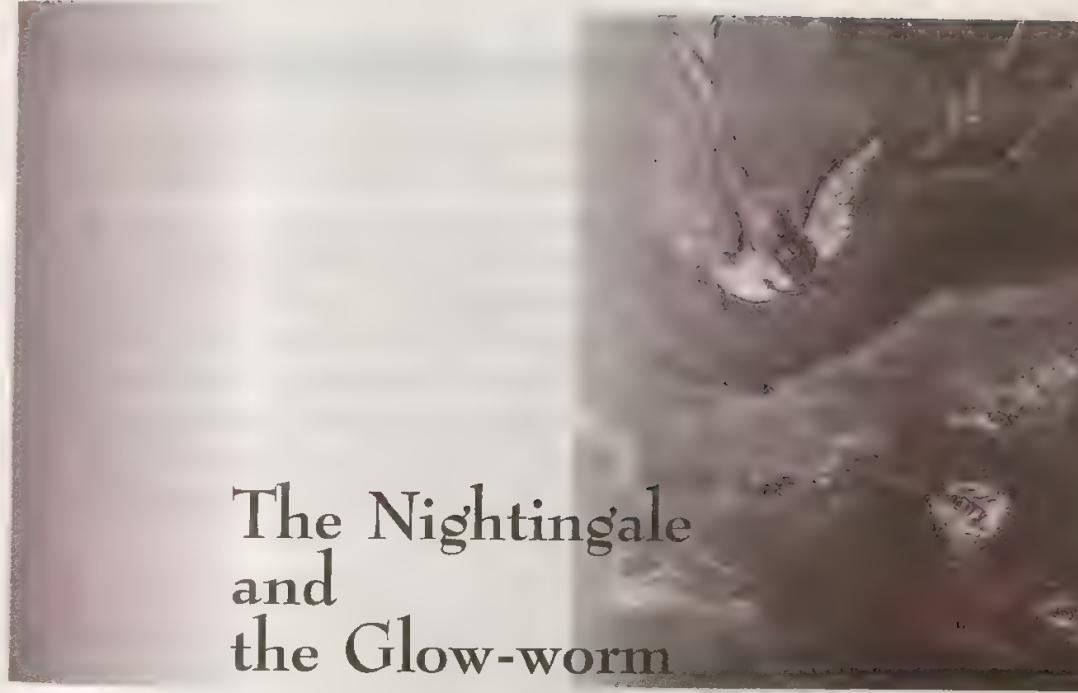
To begin with, you must realise clearly that your principal object is _____ as much as possible in order to distract _____. Of the numerous _____, the easiest and most common is _____.

talking
 to distract your opponent
 ways of accomplishing this
 his attention from the game

_____ may be done in several ways. You may talk to your opponent, either pointing out _____, or making any other _____ about the position. If your opponent comes near to _____ it is always disconcerting to say sternly 'Touch-move.' If this involves you in an argument with him, _____ for your chances of upsetting _____.

bad moves to him
 misleading remark
 talking to annoy
 his train of thought
 touching a piece
 so much the better

For the Teacher: Let some children read aloud all the paragraphs. Ask them if they play chess. Does losing a game make them very unhappy?

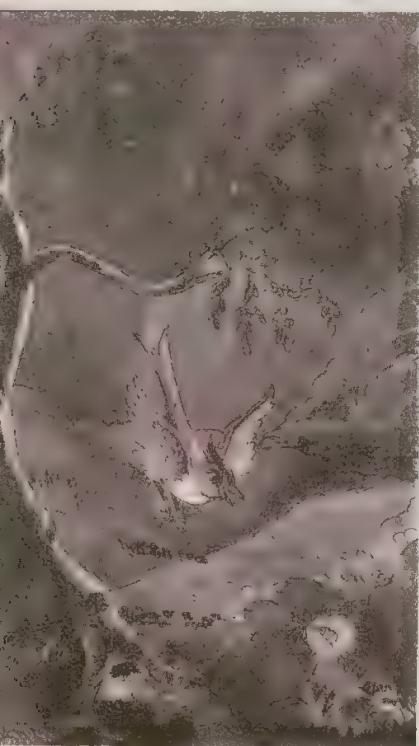


The Nightingale and the Glow-worm

Birds and animals, unlike humans, are really never cruel to one another, and seldom kill except for food. The glow-worm gives the nightingale a good reason why he should be left alone. Is the nightingale convinced?

A nightingale that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far-off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.

eve / eventide (dated): evening **his note suspended**: discontinued/finished his song **appetite**: hunger **spied**: saw by chance **hawthorn**: name of a thorny shrub or tree with white or red blossoms and small dark berries **crop**: bag-like part of a bird's throat (The nightingale decided to make a meal of the glow-worm.)



The worm, aware of his intent,
 Harangued him thus, right eloquent:
 "If you admired my lamp," quoth he,
 "As much as I your minstrelsy,
 You would abhor to do me wrong
 As much as I to spoil your song;
 For it was the self-same Power Divine
 Taught you to sing, me to shine,
 That you with music, I with light,
 Might beautify and cheer the night."

The songster heard this short oration,
 And warbling out his approbation,
 Released him, as my story tells,
 And found a supper somewhere else.

WILLIAM COWPER
 (1731-1800)

ACTIVITIES

Discuss

1. The nightingale sang
 - (i) most of the day.
 - (ii) in the evening mainly.
 - (iii) till sunset.
 - (iv) from morning till late evening.

Mark the correct answer.

intent: intention/plan **harangued** (...'rangue' pronounced as 'rang'): spoke loudly and angrily **eloquent:** an eloquent speaker is one who speaks so well that the listener is at once impressed and influenced **quoth** (dated): said **minstrelsy:** music; songs **abhor:** detest/greatly dislike **songster:** singer (here the songbird) **oration:** speech **warbling:** singing **approbation:** approval; agreement

2. "As well he might" means 'as expected' or 'as was natural'. It suggests the nightingale was hungry because

- it was late evening.
- he was too exhausted.
- he was too cheerful.

Mark the correct answer.

Write

- How did the nightingale spot the worm in darkness?
- The glow-worm appreciated the bird's singing. What did he expect the bird to do in return?
- Why, according to the glow-worm, should the nightingale leave him alone?
- Does the nightingale find the glow-worm's point convincing? How do you know?
- What are their divine gifts with which the nightingale and the glow-worm enliven the night?
- Which line in the last stanza suggests that the bird expresses his agreement by singing a song? Read the line aloud.
- (i) Which lines in the poem do you admire most?
(ii) Is it the idea or is it the way the idea has been expressed that you appreciate?
- Compare this poem with 'The Mountain and the Squirrel' and write a short note on their common theme.



5

Our Civilisation

The world has come a long way up the road to development and prosperity. Can it be called civilised? What does civilisation mean—order, safety and comfort or these and a lot more?

I

At first sight it might seem as if modern human beings who spend so much time getting help from machines are very lazy. For what are the machines for but to save people trouble? They are extra limbs which men have made outside themselves to do their work for them. Cranes and lifts are extra arms to do the job of lifting, trains and motors extra legs to do the job of walking and running. And yet it is difficult to suppose that men would have gone to all the bother of inventing these complicated machines to serve as their extra limbs merely because they were lazy; that they would have taken all this trouble merely to save themselves trouble. And in fact man is not at all lazy; he is the most restless and energetic of all living creatures.

Why is it, then, that we have gone to the trouble of inventing so many devices for saving ourselves the labour of lifting and carrying and walking and remembering? The only answer seems to be that these things bore us; they are not the things we really want to do, and so we get the machines to do them for us, in order that we may have time and energy for other things we really want to do. What things?

I cannot answer this question without saying something about the bad parts of our civilisation. But it would not be fair to do this without first praising it for its good parts. What are they?

First and foremost there are order and safety. If today I have a quarrel with another man, I do not get beaten merely because I am physically weaker and he can knock me down. I go to law, and the law will decide as fairly as it can between the two of us. Thus in disputes right has taken the place of might. Moreover, the law protects me from robbery and violence. Nobody may come and break into my house, steal my goods or run off with my children. Of course there are burglars, and the law punishes them whenever it catches them.

It is difficult for us to realise how much this safety means. Without safety those higher activities of mankind which make up civilisation could not go on. The inventor could not invent, the scientist could not find out and the artist could not make beautiful things. Hence order and safety, although they are not themselves civilisation, are things without which civilisation would be impossible. They are as necessary to our civilisation as the air we breathe is to us; and we have grown so used to them that we do not notice them any more than we notice the air.

We are also largely free from the fear of pain. People still fall ill, but since the use of anaesthetics became common,

anaesthetics: substances (chloroform, ether, etc.) that induce a painless state (given to a patient before surgery)

illness is no longer the terrible thing it used to be. And people are ill much less often. To be healthy is not to be civilised but unless you have good health, you cannot enjoy anything or achieve anything. There have, it is true, been great men who have been invalids, but their work was done in spite of their ill-health, and, good as it was, it would have been better had they been well. Not only do men and women enjoy better health, they live longer than they ever did before.

Thirdly, our civilisation is more secure than any that have gone before it. This is because it is much more widely spread. Most of the previous civilisations known to history came to an end because vigorous but uncivilised peoples broke in upon them and destroyed them. This was the fate of Babylon and Assyria; it happened over and over again in India and China; it brought about the end of Greece and the fall of Rome.

Now, whatever the dangers which threaten our civilisation, and they are many, it seems likely to escape this one. Previous civilisations were like oases in a surrounding desert of savagery. Sooner or later the desert closed in and the oasis was no more. But today it is the oasis which is spreading over the desert.

The world has now for the first time a chance of becoming a single whole, a unity. So far as buying and selling and the exchange of goods are concerned, it is a unity already. The things in a grocer's shop, for instance, are from several countries. There are oranges from Brazil, dates from Africa, rice from India and tea from China. No king, not even Solomon in all his glory, could draw on such rich stores of

invalids: those unable to live a normal life on account of long sickness and suffering **oases** (plural of *oasis*): fertile patches of land in a desert with water and trees **savagery:** savage or wild behaviour

varied produce as the housewife who does her shopping at the grocer's. The fact that these things come to us from all over the world means that for the first time the world is becoming a single place, instead of a lot of separate places shut off from one another.

Write

I. Answer the following questions.

1. What, according to the writer, seems to be the main reason for the invention of machines?
2. In what sense are machines our extra limbs?
3. How do machines help us use our time and energy better?
4. "In disputes right has taken the place of might."

This refers to

- (i) a civilised society where disputes are settled according to rules.
- (ii) a society with an efficient administration.
- (iii) a reformed society.

Mark the right item.

5. Write 'True' or 'False' against each of the following.
 - (i) Nothing is possible in the absence of order and safety. _____
 - (ii) Order and safety are civilisation itself. _____
 - (iii) We do not notice the presence of order and safety; we notice only its absence. _____
 - (iv) Order and safety are necessary conditions for the existence of civilisation. _____
 - (v) A civilised society is problem-free. _____
6. (i) Which is the second good part of civilisation?
(ii) What are its two main benefits to human beings?
7. (i) What are old civilisations compared to?
(ii) The comparison is reversed with reference to modern civilisation. Describe it in your own words.
8. The present world is a global village. What evidence of it do you find in the last paragraph?

II

In democratic countries all are equal before the law and have a voice in deciding how and by whom they shall be governed. But the sharing-out of money—which means the sharing-out of food and clothing and houses and books and so on—is still very unfair. While some few people live in luxury, many have not even enough to eat and drink and wear. Even in the finest of the world's cities thousands of people live in dreadful surroundings. There are many families of five or six persons who live in a single room; in this room they sleep and dress and wash and eat their meals; in this same room they are born, and in this same room they die. And they live like this not for fun, but because they are too poor to afford another room.

A still greater danger comes from war. You might say that all through history there have been wars and that mankind has survived in spite of them. It has even developed and become civilised in spite of them. This is true, but unfortunately as part of his development man has enormously increased his power over nature. He has learned to tap the hidden forces of our planet and use them for his purposes. Now, if his purposes are those of destruction, each fresh advance in his mastery of nature only increases the danger from war, as men learn to destroy one another in ever great numbers, from ever great distances, and in ever more varied and ingenious ways. Man has now discovered how to release the colossal forces locked up in the atom. In consequence, the leading nations of the world are now making atom bombs, which, if another war came, would almost certainly be widely used. Nobody knows what the

ingenious: clever; original

colossal: immense/huge

effect of dropping atom bombs on a large scale would be, but it is quite possible that the total destruction of civilisation might ensue. As somebody has jokingly remarked, in the next war men will fight with atom bombs and in the war after that with bows and arrows.

Yet another great defect of our civilisation is that it does not know what to do with its knowledge. Science, as we have seen, has given us powers fit for the gods, yet we use them like small children.

For example, we do not know how to manage our machines. Machines as I have already explained, were made to be man's servants; yet he has grown so dependent on them that they are in a fair way to become his masters. Already most men spend most of their lives looking after and waiting upon machines. And the machines are very stern masters. They must be given petrol to drink, and oil to wash with, and must be kept at the right temperature. And if they do not get their meals when they expect them, they grow sulky and refuse to work, or burst with rage, and blow up, and spread ruin and destruction all round them. So we have to wait upon them very attentively and do all that we can to keep them in a good temper. Already we find it difficult either to work or play without machines, and a time may come when they will rule us altogether, just as we rule the animals.

What are we to do with our time? On the whole, it must be admitted, we do very little. For the most part we use our time and energy to make more and better machines; but more and better machines will only give us still more time and still more energy, and what are we to do with them?

The answer, I think, is that we should try to become more civilised. For the machines themselves, and the power which

ensue: follow

the machines have given us, are not civilisation but aids to civilisation. There is nothing particularly civilised in getting into a train. Being civilised means making and liking beautiful things, thinking freely, and living rightly and maintaining justice equally between man and man. Man has a better chance today to do these things than he ever had before; he has more time, more energy, less to fear and less to fight against except for the dangers he has himself created. If he will give his time and energy which his machines have won for him to making more beautiful things, to finding out more and more about the universe, to removing the causes of quarrels between nations, to discovering how to prevent poverty, then I think our civilisation would undoubtedly be the greatest, as it would be the most lasting, that there has ever been.

C. E. M. JOAD

(1891-1954)

—from *The Story of Civilisation*

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Write

I. Answer the following questions.

1. Democracy ensures equality and something else. What is it?
2. In which area has equality not been possible even in highly developed countries?
3. What is the biggest threat to the modern world?
4. (i) What is the most unfortunate part of our mastery over nature?
(ii) Why is it unfortunate?

5. (i) In what way have machines become our masters?
(ii) As masters, are they easy or difficult to please? Give reasons for your answer.
6. What, according to the writer, is true civilisation?
7. Is the writer optimistic about the future of civilisation? If yes, what is the basis of his hope?

WORDS IN USE

I. One word is italicised in each sentence. Find its opposite in the box and fill in the blanks.

modern remember difficult idle praise

1. It is good to be *busy* but really refreshing to remain _____ once in a way.
2. There is much in *ancient* civilisations that appeals to _____ thought.
3. It may be *easy* to frame rules but most _____ to follow them in letter and spirit.
4. Isn't it amazing how easily we *forget* what we do not want to _____?
5. Many an aspiring poet gives up his trade when anything he writes evokes more *criticism* than _____.

II. Look at the following words and their plural forms.

child	-	children
ox	-	oxen
sheep	-	sheep
trout	-	trout

Now write the plural forms of the following.

1. oasis _____ axis _____
crisis _____ basis _____
2. mother-in-law _____
commander-in-chief _____
step-mother _____

For the Teacher: Activities under **Words in Use** to be done orally first.

passerby _____
onlooker _____
bypass _____

III. Write the noun forms of the words given in the box. Arrange them under the headings given. Add two new words to each list.

decide	enjoy	protect	advance
specialise	better	describe	fulfil
develop	suppose	perfect	achieve
complicate	arrange	prevent	employ

-ment

-ion

IV. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with the words in the box.

save lift part

1. You have played your _____ efficiently in this matter.
2. The administrative office is on the tenth floor. Let us take the _____.
3. " _____ me up, mummy. I can't see," said the child.
4. It is prudent to _____ part of one's pocket money each month.
5. This building needs a face _____. Give it a lick of paint.

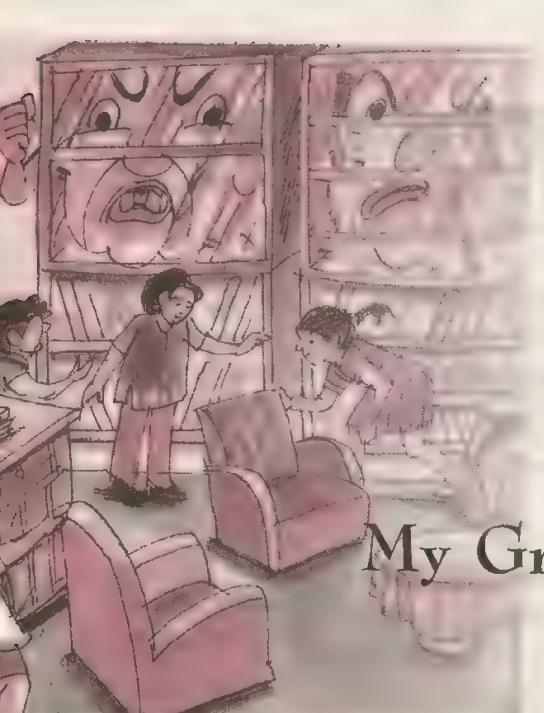
6. Disagreements threatened to wreck the peace talks, but the President's intervention was enough to _____ the situation.
7. Despite their poverty, they refused to _____ with the family jewels.
8. Though he had been dismissed, he said he had left his job willingly, just to _____ face.
9. Discretion is the better _____ of valour.

COMPOSITION

Scan through newspapers and find a story about a minor dispute between two persons or parties that was settled by the court. You can change the story wherever necessary. Write the story in your own words.

or

Write about an imaginary dispute between two persons in your locality. The dispute was settled by 'might', not 'right'. What were the unfortunate consequences of it? What could have been a better solution?



6

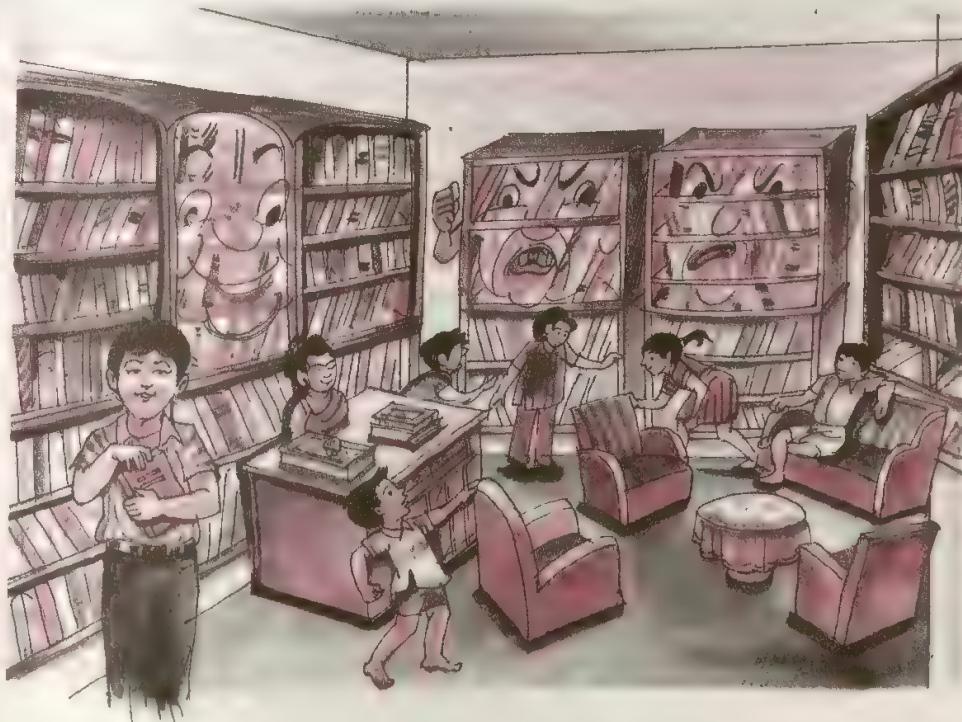
My Grandfather's Bookcase

Books are meant to be read and enjoyed. A bookcase with a large number of books indicates that the people to whom it belongs are avid readers and cultivated people. Not always so. But if there are books on the shelf, the reader will not be far behind.

As a child I spent my holidays in my grandfather's house in Calcutta, and it was there that I began to read. My grandfather's house was a chaotic and noisy place, populated by a large number of uncles, aunts, cousins, and dependants, some of them bizarre, some merely eccentric, but almost all excitable in the extreme. Yet I learned much more about reading in this house than I ever did in school.

The walls of my grandfather's house were lined with rows of books, neatly stacked in glass-fronted bookcases. The bookcases were prominently displayed in a large hall that served, among innumerable other functions, also those of playground, sitting room, and hallway. The bookcases towered

above us, looking down, eavesdropping on every conversation, keeping track of family gossip, glowering upon quarrelling children. Very rarely were the bookcases stirred out of their silent vigil. I was perhaps the only person in the house who raided them regularly, and I was in Calcutta for no more than a couple of months every year. When the bookcases were disturbed in my absence, it was usually not for their contents but because some special occasion required their cleaning. If the impending event happened to concern a weighty matter like a delicate marital negotiation, the bookcases got a very thorough scrubbing indeed. And well they deserved it, for at such times they were important props in the little plays that were enacted in their presence. They let the visitor know that



eavesdropping: listening secretly to a private conversation **glowering:** looking angrily **props:** objects used in the sets of a play

this was a house in which books were valued; in other words, that we were cultivated people. This is always important in Calcutta, for Calcutta is an oddly bookish city.

Were we indeed cultivated people? I wonder. On the whole I don't think so. In my memory my grandfather's house is always full—of aunts, uncles, cousins. I am astonished sometimes when I think of how many people it housed, fed, entertained, educated. But my uncles were busy, practical and, on the whole, successful professionals, with little time to spend on books.

Only one of my uncles was a real reader. He was a shy and rather retiring man, not the kind of person who takes it upon himself to educate his siblings or improve his relatives' taste. The books in the bookcases were almost all his. He was too quiet a man to carry much weight in family matters, and his views never counted for much when the elders sought each other's counsel. Yet despite the fullness of the house and the fierce competition for space, it was taken for granted that his bookcases would occupy the place of honour in the hall. Eventually tiring of his noisy relatives, my book-loving uncle decided to move to a house of his own in a distant and uncharacteristically quiet part of the city. But oddly enough the bookcases stayed; by this time the family was so attached to them that they were less dispensable than my uncle.

In the years that followed, the house passed into the hands of a branch of the family that was definitely very far from bookish. Yet their attachment to the bookcases seemed to increase inversely to their love of reading. I had been engaged in a secret pillaging of the bookcases for a very long time. Under the new regime my depredations came to a sudden

less dispensable than: more important than **pillaging:** looting
depredations: damage caused by pillaging

halt; at the slightest squeak of a hinge, hordes of cousins would materialise suddenly around my ankles, snapping dire threats.

It served no purpose to tell them that the books were being consumed by maggots and mildew, that books rotted when they were not read. Arguments such as these interested them not at all: as far as they were concerned the bookcases and their contents were a species of property and were subject to the same laws.

This attitude made me impatient, even contemptuous at the time. Books were meant to be read, I thought, by people who valued and understood them: I felt not the slightest remorse for my long years of thievery. It seemed to me a terrible waste that non-readers should succeed in appropriating my uncle's library. Today I am not so sure. Perhaps those cousins were teaching me a lesson that was important on its own terms: they were teaching me to value the printed word. Would anyone who had not learned these lessons well be foolhardy enough to imagine that a living could be made from words? I doubt it.

In another way they were also teaching me what a book is, a proper book, that is, not just printed paper gathered between covers. However much I may be chafed against the regime that stood between me and the bookcases, I have not forgotten those lessons. For me, to this day, a book, a proper book, is and always will be the kind of book that was on the bookshelves.

AMITAV GHOSH
(b. 1956)

—from *The Imam and the Indian*

chafed: (become) irritated; impatient

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION**Write****I. Answer the following questions.**

1. The author remembers his grandfather's house mainly for
 - (i) the glassy bookcases that stood in the hall.
 - (ii) the variety of people who lived there.
 - (iii) his first introduction to the world of books.Mark the right item.
2. The hall looked like a library but it served many other functions. Mention a few things that went on there.
3. (i) The bookcases kept "a silent vigil". What do you understand by this?
(ii) Who stirred them out of their vigil?
4. When were the bookcases usually cleaned?
5. One of the uncles was different from the others. In what way was he different?
6. "... they were less dispensable than my uncle."
(i) What does 'they' refer to?
(ii) What did the family value more — a member of the household or a symbol of status?
7. The old house passed into the hands of new owners. How did it affect the writer's relationship with the bookcases?
8. What seemed to the writer "a terrible waste"?
9. (i) What lesson, does he think, the cousins were teaching him?
(ii) How was it useful to him in later years?
10. What, according to the writer, is a proper book?
11. What impression would one form of a household which had many bookcases?

II. Complete the following sentences taking their appropriate parts from both boxes below.

1. Some members in my grandfather's house were bizarre, _____
2. The bookcases were displayed _____
3. The bookcases were often disturbed _____
4. My uncles were busy, practical _____
5. In the years that followed, _____

A

- not for their contents
- and, on the whole, successful professionals
- some were eccentric
- the house passed into the hands of a branch of a family
- in a large hall

B

- that served as playground and sitting room also
- that was definitely far from bookish
- but almost all of them were very excitable
- but for their cleaning on special occasions
- with little time to spend on books

Discuss

Say 'True' or 'False' for each of the following statements, and why.

1. The presence of books in a house proves that its inhabitants are educated people.
2. One young member of the large family showed keen interest in books, as and when he could.

3. One uncle, who loved books, was consulted by the family in all important matters.
4. The new owners of the house loved the old bookcases for their contents.
5. The writer took away books stealthily without shame or remorse.
6. Books, even when they are not read, should be valued for their worth.

WORDS IN USE

1. The phrases given on the left occur in the text. Match them with their meanings on the right.

1. excitable in the extreme	(i) a quiet, non-interfering person
2. raided them (bookcases)	(ii) cleaning with attention to every detail
3. marital negotiation	(iii) governed by
4. thorough scrubbing	(iv) occupied (myself) with them, often stealing from them
5. bookish city	(v) successfully own what is rightfully someone else's
6. a retiring man	(vi) increase (in something) in direct proportion to decrease (in something else)
7. increase inversely to	(vii) greatly excited (by nature)
8. materialise suddenly	(viii) a marriage proposal under discussion
9. subject to	(ix) where people read and value books, and are governed by ideas more than practical experience
10. succeed in appropriating	(x) appear all of a sudden

II. Notice how the word *rain* has been used in the following sentences.

(a) It *rained* all night. (rain falling)
 (b) Blows *rained* on the door. (constant loud knocking; Knocks fall on the door like rain.)

In sentence (a), *rain* has a **literal** meaning. In sentence (b), it has a **figurative** meaning.

1. Now read the following sentence. Some words are italicised. Say which word has a literal meaning and which one has a figurative meaning.

The *bookcases* towered above us, *looking down*, *eavesdropping* on every *conversation*, *keeping track* of family *gossip*, *glowering* upon quarrelling *children*.

2. Write two or three sentences using one word with a figurative meaning.

Example: This exercise will *lift* your spirits.

COMPOSITION

- Imagine that you visit your grandfather's house every summer.
- You like your grandfather's library, and often pick up books of your choice.
- Some of those books are now in your personal collection, and your grandfather knows it.
- Now write two or three short paragraphs describing the following.
 - your last visit to your grandfather's house
 - some members of the household and their style of living
 - your grandfather's library
 - your encounter with a cousin when you were picking up a couple of books from the shelf
 - your explanation of the incident to your grandfather, who let you keep the books



7

A Visit to Cambridge

A visit to England would be incomplete without a visit to Cambridge, among other places. A tour through Cambridge had a very pleasant and illuminating surprise for the author. What was it? Read and find out.

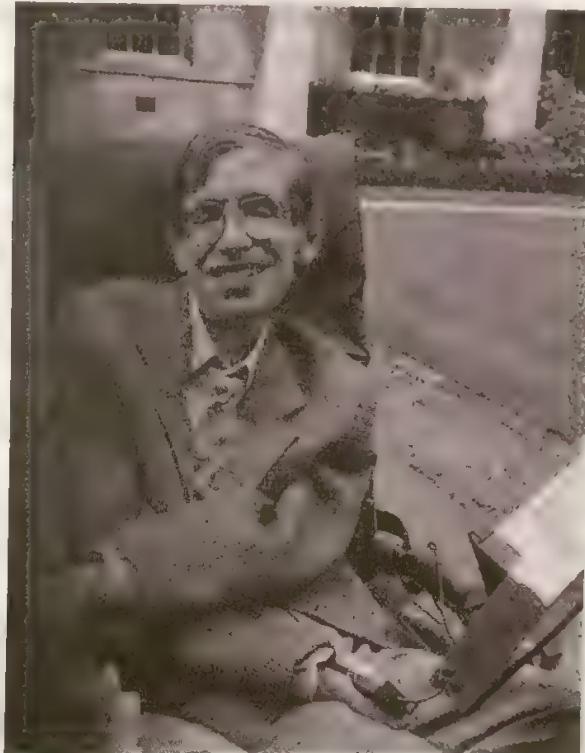
CAMBRIDGE was my metaphor for England, and it was strange that when I left it it had become altogether something else, because I had met Stephen Hawking there.

It was on a walking tour through Cambridge that the guide mentioned Stephen Hawking, "poor man, who is quite disabled now, though he is a worthy successor to Issac Newton, whose Chair he has at the university."

And I started, because I had quite forgotten that this most brilliant and completely paralysed astrophysicist, the author of *A Brief History of Time*, one of the biggest best-sellers ever, lived here. But there wasn't much time to think. It was a peculiar kind of walking tour.

When the tour was done, I rushed to a phone booth and, almost tearing the cord so it could reach me outside, phoned

astrophysicist: scholar of astrophysics — branch of physics dealing with the stars, planets, etc.



Stephen Hawking

Stephen Hawking's house. There was his assistant on the line and I told him I had come in a wheelchair from India (perhaps he thought I had propelled myself all the way) to write about my travels in Britain. I had to see Professor Hawking—even ten minutes would do. "Half an hour," he said. "From three-thirty to four."

And suddenly I felt weak all over. Growing up disabled, you get fed up with people asking you to be brave, as if you have a courage account on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque. The only thing that makes you stronger is seeing somebody like you, achieving something huge. Then you know how much is possible and you reach out further than you ever thought you could.

"I haven't been brave," said his disembodied computer-voice, the next afternoon. "I've had no choice."

Surely, I wanted to say, living creatively with the reality of his disintegrating body was a choice? But I kept quiet, because I felt guilty every time I spoke to him, forcing him to respond. There he was, tapping at the little switch in his hand, trying to find the words on his computer with the only bit of movement left to him, his long, pale fingers. Every so often, his eyes would shut in frustrated exhaustion. And sitting opposite him I could feel his anguish, the mind buoyant with thoughts that came out in frozen phrases and sentences stiff as corpses.

"A lot of people seem to think that disabled people are chronically unhappy," I said. "I know that's not true myself. Are you often laughing inside?"

About three minutes later, he responded, "I find it amusing when people patronise me."

"And do you find it annoying when someone like me comes and disturbs you in your work?"

The answer flashed. "Yes." Then he smiled his one-way smile and I knew, without being sentimental or silly, that I was looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world.

A first glimpse of him is shocking, because he is like a still photograph—as if all those pictures of him in magazines and newspapers have turned three-dimensional.

Then you see the head twisted sideways into a slump, the torso shrunk inside the pale blue shirt, the wasted legs; you look at his eyes which can speak, still, and they are saying something huge and urgent—it is hard to tell what. But you are shaken because you have seen something you never thought could be seen.

Before you, like a lantern whose walls are worn so thin you glimpse only the light inside, is the incandescence of a man. The body, almost irrelevant, exists only like a case made of shadows. So that I, no believer in eternal souls, know that this is what each of us is; everything else an accessory.

"What do you think is the best thing about being disabled?" I had asked him earlier.

"I don't think there is anything good about being disabled."

"I think," I said, "you do discover how much kindness there is in the world."

"Yes," he said; it was a disadvantage of his voice synthesiser that it could convey no inflection, no shades or tone. And I could not tell how enthusiastically he agreed with me.

Every time I shifted in my chair or turned my wrist to watch the time—I wanted to make every one of our thirty-minutes count—I felt a huge relief and exhilaration in the possibilities of my body. How little it mattered then that I would never walk, or even stand.

I told him how he had been an inspiration beyond cliché for me, and, surely, for others—did that thought help him?

"No," he said; and I thought how foolish I was to ask. When your body is a claustrophobic room and the walls are growing narrower day by day, it doesn't do much good to know that there are people outside smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.

"Is there any advice you can give disabled people, something that might help make life better?"

incandescence: inner glow or light **accessory:** not essential but extra, though decorative **inflection:** rise and fall of the voice in speaking **cliché:** phrase or idea used so often that it loses its meaning **claustrophobic:** very small and suffocating ('Claustrophobia' is abnormal fear of being in an enclosed space.)



Firdaus Kanga

"They should concentrate on what they are good at; I think things like the disabled Olympics are a waste of time."

"I know what you mean." I remembered the years I'd spent trying to play a Spanish guitar considerably larger than I was; and how gleefully I had unstringed it one night.

The half-hour was up. "I think I've annoyed you enough," I said, grinning. "Thank you for ..."

"Stay." I waited. "Have some tea. I can show you the garden."

The garden was as big as a park, but Stephen Hawking covered every inch, rumbling along in his motorised wheelchair while I dodged to keep out of the way. We couldn't talk very much; the sun made him silent, the letters on his screen disappearing in the glare.

An hour later, we were ready to leave. I didn't know what to do. I could not kiss him or cry. I touched his shoulder and wheeled out into the summer evening. I looked back; and I knew he was waving, though he wasn't. Watching him, an embodiment of my bravest self, the one I was moving towards, the one I had believed in for so many years, alone, I knew that my journey was over. For now.

FIRDAUS KANGA

(b. 1959)

— from *Heaven on Wheels*
(abridged)

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Discuss

Which is the right item?

1. "Cambridge was my metaphor for England." To the writer,
 - (i) Cambridge was a reputed university in England.
 - (ii) England was famous for Cambridge.
 - (iii) Cambridge was the real England.
2. The writer phoned Stephen Hawking's house
 - (i) from the nearest phone booth.
 - (ii) from outside a phone booth.
 - (iii) from inside a phone booth.
3. Every time he spoke to the scientist, the writer felt guilty because
 - (i) he wasn't sure what he wanted to ask.
 - (ii) he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.
 - (iii) he was face to face with a legend.
4. "I felt a huge relief ... in the *possibilities of my body*." In the given context, the italicised words refer to
 - (i) shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.
 - (ii) standing up, walking.
 - (iii) speaking, writing.

Write

1. Answer the following questions.
 1. (i) Did the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking make the writer nervous? If so, why?
(ii) Did he at the same time feel very excited? If so, why?
 2. Guess the first question put to the scientist by the writer.
 3. Stephen Hawking said, "I've had no choice." Does the writer think there was a choice? What was it?
 4. "I could feel his anguish." What could be the anguish?
 5. What endeared the scientist to the writer so that he said he was looking at one of the most beautiful ~~men~~ in the world?

6. Read aloud the description of 'the beautiful' man. Which is the most beautiful sentence in the description?
7. (i) If 'the lantern' is the man, what would its 'walls' be?
 (ii) What is housed within the thin walls?
 (iii) What general conclusion does the writer draw from the comparison?
8. What is the scientist's message for the disabled?
9. Why does the writer refer to the guitar incident? Which idea does it support?
10. The writer expresses his great gratitude to Stephen Hawking. What is the gratitude for?

II. Complete the following sentences taking their appropriate parts from both boxes below.

1. There was his assistant on the line ...
2. You get fed up with people asking you to be brave, ...
3. There he was, ...
4. You look at his eyes which can speak, ...
5. It doesn't do much good to know ...

A

- tapping at a little switch in his hand
- and I told him
- that there are people
- as if you have a courage account
- and they are saying something huge and urgent

B

- trying to find the words on his computer.
- I had come in a wheelchair from India.
- on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.
- smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.
- it is hard to tell what.

WORDS IN USE

I. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using the appropriate forms of the words given in the following box.

guide succeed chair travel pale draw true

1. I met a _____ from an antique land.
2. I need special _____ in Mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.
3. The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy _____ to Issac Newton.
4. His other problems _____ into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.
5. The meeting was _____ by the youngest member of the board.
6. Some people say 'yours _____' when they informally refer to themselves.
7. I wish it had been a _____ match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

II. Look at the following words.

walk stick

Can you create a meaningful phrase using both these words?

It is simple. Add *-ing* to the verb and use it before the noun. Put an article at the beginning.

a walking stick

Now make six such phrases using the words given in the box.

read/session	smile/face
revolve/chair	walk/tour
dance/doll	win/chance

COMPOSITION

- Imagine that you are a journalist.
- You have been asked to interview the president of the village *panchayat*.
- Write eight to ten questions you wish to ask.
- The questions should elicit comments as well as plans regarding water and electricity, cleanliness and school education in the village.

For the Teacher: Group work to precede the writing task under **Composition**. Finalise questions orally before they are put on paper.

Abou Ben Adhem



On a peaceful night, Abou Ben Adhem found himself face to face with an angel, who told him that his name was not among those who loved God. Abou told the angel that he loved and respected human beings. The angel reappeared the next night with the news Abou Ben Adhem loved to hear. What was it?

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
 An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said,
“What writest thou?” —The vision rais’d its head,
 And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer’d, “The names of those who love the Lord.”

exceeding: great; perfect **the presence:** the angel, who was present
the vision: the angel **sweet accord:** complete agreement and harmony



“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”

The angel wrote, and vanish’d. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show’d the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.

LEIGH HUNT
(1784-1859)

led all the rest: was on top of the list of names

ACTIVITIES

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. How does the poet show his deep respect for Abou Ben Adhem?
2. (i) What has Abou's room been compared to?
(ii) What does this simile (comparison), along with "moonlight ... making it rich" and "dream of peace", suggest to you about Abou's qualities as a human being?
3. What was the angel recording in his book?
4. What did Abou request the angel to record about him?
5. The angel came back *with a great wakening light*. The italicised words refer to
(i) the moonlight.
(ii) the angel's halo.
(iii) knowledge and wisdom.

Mark the right answer.

6. What news did the angel bring on his second visit?
7. The message contained in the poem is
(i) God loves those who love him.
(ii) God loves those who love other human beings.
(iii) God loves those who don't love themselves.

Mark the right answer.

8



The Summit Within

Major H. P. S. Ahluwalia was a member of the first successful Indian expedition to Mount Everest in 1965. How did he feel when he stood on the highest point in the world? Let us hear his story in his own words.

OF all the emotions which surged through me as I stood on the summit of Everest, looking over miles of panorama below us, the dominant one I think was humility. The physical in me seemed to say, "Thank God, it's all over!" However, instead of being jubilant, there was a tinge of sadness. Was it because I had already done the 'ultimate' in climbing and there would be nothing higher to climb and all roads hereafter would lead down?

By climbing the summit of Everest you are overwhelmed by a deep sense of joy and thankfulness. It is a joy which lasts a lifetime. The experience changes you completely. The man who has been to the mountains is never the same again.

surged: arose suddenly and intensely

jubilant: very happy because of success

panorama: view of a wide area

tinge: trace/shade

As I look back at life after climbing Everest I cannot help remarking about the other summit—the summit of the mind—no less formidable and no easier to climb.

Even when getting down from the summit, once the physical exhaustion had gone, I began asking myself the question why I had climbed Everest. Why did the act of reaching the summit have such a hold on my imagination? It was already a thing of the past, something done yesterday. With every passing day, it would become more remote. And then what would remain? Would my memories fade slowly away?

All these thoughts led me to question myself as to why people climb mountains? It is not easy to answer the question. The simplest answer would be, as others have said, "Because it is there." It presents great difficulties. Man takes delight in overcoming obstacles. The obstacles in climbing a mountain are physical. A climb to a summit means endurance, persistence and will power. The demonstration of these physical qualities is no doubt exhilarating, as it was for me also.

I have a more personal answer to the question. From my childhood I have been attracted by mountains. I had been miserable, lost, when away from mountains, in the plains. Mountains are nature at its best. Their beauty and majesty pose a great challenge, and like many, I believe that mountains are a means of communion with God.



Major H. P. S. Ahluwalia

Once having granted this, the question remains: Why Everest? Because it is the highest, the mightiest and has defied many previous attempts. It takes the last ounce of one's energy. It is a brutal struggle with rock and ice. Once taken up, it cannot be given up halfway even when one's life is at stake. The passage back is as difficult as the passage onwards. And then, when the summit is climbed, there is the exhilaration, the joy of having done something, the sense of a battle fought and won. There is a feeling of victory and of happiness.

Glimpsing a peak in the distance, I get transported to another world. I experience a change within myself which can only be called mystical. By its beauty, aloofness, might, ruggedness, and the difficulties encountered on the way, the peak draws me to it—as Everest did. It is a challenge that is difficult to resist.

Once at the summit, there is a sense of being connected with something beyond you. This curious sense of nearness to the infinite is what really sustained us in our final physical effort in climbing to the top of Everest. It brought into full play our courage and confidence. Amidst the snows and winds of that cold, unfriendly and wholly difficult region, we were able to hold our own. Our bodies were only the vehicles for housing the determination to overcome it all, come what may.

I was not let down by Everest. The world did not let us down, for it reacted fully to our achievement. The going was difficult but the after-effects were satisfying. Not only in India but everywhere else in the world our having gone to the summit was acclaimed suitably. One does not do it

defied: frustrated; resisted **mystical:** spiritual **the infinite:** the limitless
hold our own: maintain our position against all odds **acclaimed:** applauded

merely for the fame it brings, nonetheless the acclamation and fame are satisfying.

Looking back I find that I have not yet fully explained why I climbed Everest. It is like answering a question why you breathe. Why do you help your neighbour? Why do you want to do good acts? There is no final answer possible.

And then there is the fact that Everest is not just a physical climb. The man who has been to the mountain-top will never be the same again. He gains immensely from the mountain. He becomes conscious in a special manner of his own smallness in this large universe.

The physical conquest of a mountain is only one part of the achievement. There is more to it than that. It is followed by a sense of fulfilment. There is the satisfaction of a deep urge to rise above one's surroundings. It is the eternal love for adventure in man. The experience is not merely physical. It is emotional. It is spiritual.

An American mountaineer once defined climbing as "nine-tenths hell, one-tenth beauty". Consider a typical climb, towards the summit on the last heights. You are sharing a





The author and Phu Dorji on the summit of Mount Everest

rope with another climber. You firm in. He cuts the steps in the hard ice. Then he belays and you inch your way up. The climb is grim. You strain every nerve as you take every step. Famous climbers have left records of the help given by others. They have also recorded how they needed just that help. Else they might have given up. Breathing is difficult. You curse yourself for having let yourself in for this. You wonder why you ever undertook the ascent. There are moments when you feel

like going back. It would be

sheer relief to go down, instead of up. But almost at once you snap out of that mood. There is something in you that does not let you give up the struggle. And you go on. Your companion keeps up with you. Just another fifty feet. Or a hundred, maybe. You ask yourself: Is there no end? You look at your companion and he looks at you. You draw inspiration from each other. And then, without first being aware of it, you are at the summit.

Looking round from the summit you tell yourself that it was worthwhile. Other silvery peaks appear through the clouds. If you are lucky the sun may be on them. The surrounding peaks look like a jewelled necklace round the neck of your summit. Below, you see vast valleys

sloping into the distance. It is an ennobling, enriching experience to just look down from the summit of a mountain. You bow down and make your obeisance to whichever God you worship.

I left on Everest a picture of Guru Nanak. Rawat left a picture of Goddess Durga. Phu Dorji left a relic of the Buddha. Edmund Hillary had buried a cross under a cairn (a heap of rocks and stones) in the snow. These are not symbols of conquest but of reverence.

The experience of having climbed to the summit changes you completely.

There is another summit. It is within yourself. It is in your own mind. Each man carries within himself his own mountain peak. He must climb it to reach to a fuller knowledge of himself. It is fearful, and unscalable. It cannot be climbed by anyone else. You yourself have to do it. The physical act of climbing to the summit of a mountain outside is akin to the act of climbing the mountain within. The effects of both the climbs are the same. Whether the mountain you climb is physical or emotional and spiritual, the climb will certainly change you. It teaches you much about the world and about yourself.

I venture to think that my experience as an Everester has provided me with the inspiration to face life's ordeals resolutely. Climbing the mountain was a worthwhile experience. The conquest of the internal summit is equally worthwhile. The internal summits are, perhaps, higher than Everest.

H. P. S. AHLUWALIA
(b. 1936)

make your obeisance: show your obedience or submission **ordeals:** painful experiences **resolutely:** with determination or firmness

ACTIVITIES**COMPREHENSION****Discuss**

1. Standing on Everest, the writer was
 - (i) overjoyed.
 - (ii) very sad.
 - (iii) jubilant and sad.Choose the right item.
2. The emotion that gripped him was one of
 - (i) victory over hurdles.
 - (ii) humility and a sense of smallness.
 - (iii) greatness and self importance.
 - (iv) joy of discovery.Choose the right item.
3. "The summit of the mind" refers to
 - (i) great intellectual achievements.
 - (ii) the process of maturing mentally and spiritually.
 - (iii) overcoming personal ambition for common welfare.
 - (iv) living in the world of thought and imagination.
 - (v) the triumph of mind over worldly pleasures for a noble cause.
 - (vi) a fuller knowledge of oneself.Mark the item(s) **not** relevant.

Write

- I. Answer the following questions.
 1. What are the three qualities that played a major role in the author's climb?
 2. Why is adventure, which is risky, also pleasurable?
 3. What was it about Mount Everest that the author found irresistible?
 4. "Our bodies were only the vehicles for housing the determination to overcome it all ..." What does 'it' refer to?
 5. One does not do it (climb a high peak) for fame alone. What does one do it for, really?

6. "He becomes conscious in a special manner of his own smallness in this large universe." This awareness defines an emotion mentioned in the first paragraph. Which is the emotion?
7. What were the "symbols of reverence" left by members of the team on Everest?
8. What, according to the writer, did his experience as an Everester teach him?

II. Write a sentence against each of the following statements. Your sentence should explain the statement. You can pick out sentences from the text and rewrite them. The first one has been done for you.

1. The experience changes you completely.
One who has been to the mountains is never the same again.
2. Man takes delight in overcoming obstacles.

3. Mountains are nature at its best.

4. The going was difficult but the after-effects were satisfying.

5. The physical conquest of a mountain is really a spiritual experience.

WORDS IN USE

I. Look at the italicised phrases and their meanings given in brackets.

- Mountains are nature *at its best*.
- Your life is *at risk*.
- He was *at his best/worst* in the last meeting.

(nature's best form and appearance)

(in danger; You run the risk of losing your life.)

(It was his best/worst performance.)

Fill in the blanks in the following dialogues choosing suitable phrases from those given in the box.

at hand at once at all
 at a low ebb at first sight

1. TEACHER : You were away from school without permission.
 Go to the principal _____ and submit your explanation.

PUPIL : Yes, Madam. But would you help me write it first?

2. ARUN : Are you unwell?

ILA : No, not _____. Why do you ask?

ARUN : If you were unwell, I would send you to my uncle.
 He is a doctor.

3. MARY : Almost every Indian film has an episode of love _____.

DAVID : Is that what makes them so popular in foreign countries?

4. ASIF : You look depressed. Why are your spirits _____ today? (Use *such* in the phrase)

ASHOK : I have to write ten sentences using words that I never heard before.

5. SHIEBA : Your big moment is close _____.

JYOTI : How should I welcome it?

SHIEBA : Get up and receive the trophy.

II. Write the noun forms of the following words adding **-ance** or **-ence** to each.

1. endure _____
2. persist _____
3. signify _____
4. confide _____
5. maintain _____
6. abhor _____

For the Teacher : Have the dialogues (Words in Use - Exercise I) read aloud by pairs of children turn by turn.

III. 1. Match words under **A** with their meanings under **B**.

A

remote

means

dominant

formidable

overwhelmed

B

difficult to overcome

most prominent

be overcome/overpowered

method(s)

far away from

2. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with appropriate words from under **A**.

- (i) There were _____ obstacles on the way, but we reached our destination safely.
- (ii) We have no _____ of finding out what happened there.
- (iii) Why he lives in a house _____ from any town or village is more than I can tell.
- (iv) _____ by gratitude, we bowed to the speaker for his valuable advice.
- (v) The old castle stands in a _____ position above the sleepy town.

COMPOSITION

Consider this sentence

Mountains are a means of communion with God.

- You know what 'communion' means. Check the footnote on page 95.
- Think of the act of worship or prayer. You believe yourself to be in the presence of the divine power. In a way, you are in communion with that power. You feel its presence around you.
- Imagine the climber on top of the summit—the height attained; limitless sky above; the climber's last ounce of energy spent; peace, gratitude and humility.

- The majesty of the mountains does bring you close to nature and the spirit and joy that lives there, if you have the ability to feel it.
- Now write a composition describing a visit to the hills, or any place which you found beautiful and inspiring.
- Try to make use of some points discussed above.

For the Teacher : For **Composition** above, let children work in small groups. The groups discuss the points given and decide if they want to use some of these points in their composition. Some compositions may be read aloud to the entire class afterwards.

Lucy Gray



Lucy Gray lived in a cottage with her parents on a wide moor. She was the sweetest child growing up in the most natural surroundings. Once caught in a storm, she was seen no more. Was she dead and gone, or had she become a part of nature?

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray;
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.



"Tonight will be a stormy night,
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! Will I gladly do:
Tis scarcely afternoon,
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work; and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe;
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor,
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

scarcely afternoon: not yet afternoon (It is two o'clock.) **faggot:** bundle of dry twigs for burning **blither:** happier/more carefree **roe:** type of small deer
wanton: playful



They wept—and, turning homeward, cried:
“In heaven we all shall meet!”
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill’s edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same.
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.



They followed from the snowy bank
These footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770-1850)

ACTIVITIES

Discuss

Poems are of various types.

- A **sonnet** is a poem of 14 lines with a fixed rhyme scheme.
- An **elegy** is a poem mourning somebody's death or expressing sorrow in general.
- A **ballad** is a song or poem that tells a story. It usually contains short stanzas.

1. Which type of a poem is 'Lucy Gray'?
2. Do you think the poet actually saw Lucy or merely a vision of her? Read the opening line again before answering.
3. Nature is creative but it can also be destructive. Examine these aspects of nature as depicted in the poem and speak a sentence or two about each.

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. The first three stanzas make four points about the story of Lucy Gray. Elaborate each in a sentence or two. Treat the opening line as the first point.
2. Who is the speaker in stanza four? What is he/she saying?
3. In stanzas 1-7, which words and phrases depict
 - (i) the family's rural background?
 - (ii) the beauty of nature?
4. Why was Lucy unable to reach the town? Was she alone?
5. Lucy's parents looked for her through the dark night. Quote lines that describe the night.
6. How did the parents know that Lucy was no more?
7. How, do you think, she met her end?
8. Why is Lucy referred to as "a living child" by some people?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Read and appreciate the following lines about Lucy written by Wordsworth in other poems.

- She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me.
- Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.
(*Thy* and *thine* in this poem refer to England.)
- How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died; and left to me
This heath; this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been
And never more will be.

For the Teacher : Encourage learners to read other Lucy poems.

9

The Great Stone Face - I



Seen from a distance, hilltops and huge rocks seem to assume various shapes. They may resemble an animal or a human figure. People attribute stories to these shapes. Some stories come true; others don't. The Great Stone Face is one such shape that reminds the inhabitants of the valley of a prophecy. What was it? Did it come true?

ONE afternoon, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cottage, talking about the Great Stone Face. They had only to lift their eyes and there it was, plain to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.

Among a range of lofty mountains, there was a spacious valley with thousands of inhabitants in it. All of them were familiar with the Great Stone Face, although some had the gift of distinguishing this grand sight more perfectly than many of their neighbours. The Great Stone Face was a work of nature, formed on the side of a mountain by huge rocks. They had been thrown together in such a position that they resembled the features of a human face. If the spectator

approached too near, he lost the outline of the enormous face and could see only a heap of rugged rocks. But seen from a distance, the Great Stone Face seemed positively human and alive.

A mother and her little boy, as we said earlier, sat at the door of their cottage, gazing at the Great Stone Face and talking about it. The child's name was Ernest.



"Mother?" eagerly inquired Ernest. "Please tell me about it."

The story was that, on some future day, a child should be born near here, who was to become the greatest and noblest person of his time and whose face, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face. People had watched and waited, but they had seen none with such a face.

"Mother," said he, while the giant face smiled on him, "I wish that it could speak, for it looks so very kindly that its voice must indeed be pleasant. If I ever see a man with such a face, I should love him dearly."

"If an old prophecy should come true," answered his mother, "we may see a man some time, with exactly such a face as that."

"What prophecy do you mean, dear

"O, Mother," cried Ernest, "I do hope that I shall live to see him!"

His mother was an affectionate and thoughtful woman. It was proper, she thought, not to discourage the fanciful hopes of her little boy. So she said to him, "Perhaps you may."

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him. It was always in his mind whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He spent his childhood in the valley, and helped his mother with his little hands and with his loving heart. In this manner, from a happy and affectionate child he grew up to be a mild and quiet youth.

About this time there went a rumour throughout the valley that the great man, who would look like the Great Stone Face, had appeared at last. It seems that, many years before, a young man had left the valley and settled at a distant seaport. Gathergold, which was his name, had set up as a shopkeeper and, being sharp in business matters, had become a very rich merchant. Everything he touched seemed to turn to gold. In time he thought of his native valley, and decided to go back there, and end his days where he had been born.

Ernest did not doubt that what the people said was true. Now he was to behold the living likeness of the Great Stone Face. While the boy was gazing up the valley one day and imagining that the Great Stone Face returned his gaze, the noise of wheels was heard, and a crowd of people cried, "Here comes the great Mr Gathergold."

A carriage dashed round the turn of the road. Bending out of the window appeared the face of an old man with yellow skin.



"He is the image of the Great Stone Face!" shouted the people.

And, what greatly puzzled Ernest, they seemed actually to believe that here was the likeness which they spoke of. He turned away sadly and gazed up the valley, where the Stone Face seemed to say: He will come! Fear not, Ernest; the man will come!

The years went on, and Ernest had grown to be a young man. When the

work of the day was over, it was usual for him to go off by himself and gaze upon the Great Stone Face. People knew that for him it had become a teacher. A simple soul—simple as when his mother first told him the old story—he beheld the marvellous face looking down the valley, and still wondered, why its human likeness was so long in coming.

By this time poor Mr Gathergold was dead and buried. His wealth, which was the body and spirit of his existence, had disappeared before his death. Since the melting away of his gold, it had been generally agreed that there was no great likeness, after all, between the ruined merchant and the face upon the mountain.

It so happened that another son of the valley had become a soldier many years before. After a great deal of hard fighting, he was now a famous commander. He was

known on the battlefield by the name of Blood-and-Thunder. Old and tired now, he had lately expressed a desire to return to his native valley. The inhabitants of the valley were determined to welcome the famous soldier, especially since it was being said that at last the likeness of the Great Stone Face had actually appeared. His childhood friends were ready to say that the general had always looked like the Stone Face. Great, therefore, was the excitement throughout the valley, and many people who had never once thought of glancing at the Great Stone Face now spent much time in gazing at it, for the sake of knowing exactly how General Blood-and-Thunder looked.

On the day of the general's arrival, Ernest and all the other people of the valley, left their work, and proceeded to the spot where a great festival had been prepared. Soldiers stood on guard, flags waved and the crowd roared. Ernest was standing too far back to see Blood-and-Thunder's face. However, he could hear several voices.

"It's the same face, exactly!" cried one man, dancing for joy.

"Wonderfully like it, that's a fact!" replied another.

"And why not?" cried a third; "he's the greatest man of this or any other age, beyond a doubt."

Ernest at last could see the general's face; and in the same glance, to the side, he could also see the Great Stone Face. If there was such a likeness as the crowd proclaimed, Ernest could not recognise it.

'Fear not, Ernest,' said his heart, as if the Great Stone Face was whispering to him, 'fear not, Ernest; he will come.'

ACTIVITIES**COMPREHENSION****Discuss**

Say 'True' or 'False' for each of the following statements, and why.

1. The Great Stone Face stood near where Ernest and his mother lived.
2. One would clearly distinguish the features of the Stone Face only from a distance.
3. Ernest loved his mother and helped her in her work.
4. Though not very rich, Gathergold was a skilful merchant.
5. Gathergold died in poverty and neglect.
6. The Great Stone Face seemed to suggest that Ernest should not fear the general.

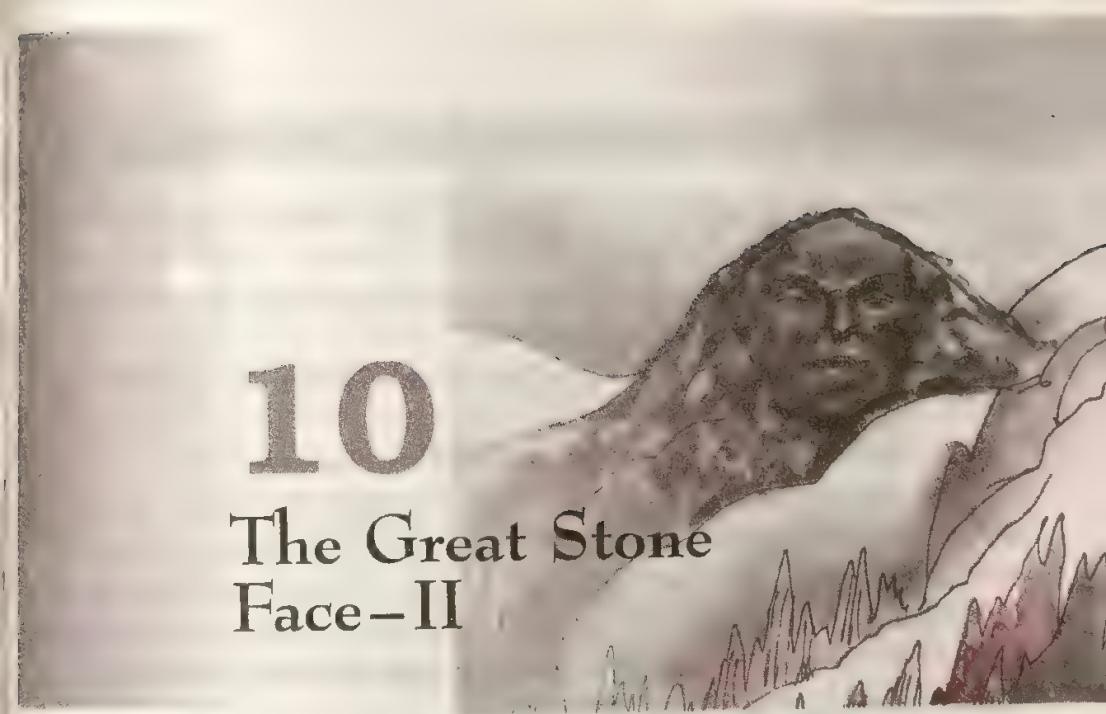
Write

Answer the following questions.

1. (i) What was the Great Stone Face?
(ii) What did young Ernest wish when he gazed at it?
2. What was the story attributed to the Stone Face?
3. What gave the people of the valley the idea that the prophecy was about to come true for the first time?
4. (i) Did Ernest see in Gathergold the likeness of the Stone Face?
(ii) Who did he confide in and how was he proved right?
5. (i) What made people believe General Blood-and-Thunder was their man?
(ii) Ernest compared the man's face with the Stone Face. What did he conclude?

10

The Great Stone Face-II



ERNEST still lived in his native valley and was now a man of middle age. Little by little, he had become known among the people as a good and simple-hearted man whose hopes were for the good of mankind. Not a day passed by that the world was not the better because of this man, humble as he was. It may be that his neighbours never considered Ernest to be more than an ordinary man; but thoughts came out of his mouth that no other human lips had spoken.

The years hurried on and brought white hairs upon the head of Ernest, and lines upon his face. He was an old man. But not in vain had he grown old; more numerous than the white hairs on his head were the wise thoughts in his mind. And Ernest had ceased to be unknown. He had become famous beyond the valley and throughout the world. Men came from far away to see and speak with him, and as they went away, they would pause to look at the Great Stone Face, feeling that they had seen its likeness in a human face, but unable to remember where.

While Ernest had been growing old, a new poet was becoming famous. He too, was a native of the valley, who

had spent the greater part of his life in distant cities. The songs of this poet found their way to Ernest. He read them after his day's work, seated before his doorway. As he read he lifted his eyes to the mountain.

"O Great Stone Face," he said, "is not this man worthy to be your likeness?"

The face seemed to smile, but did not answer.

Now it happened that the poet, though he lived so far away, had not only heard of Ernest but had thought much about his character and wished to meet him. One summer day, therefore, he arrived at Ernest's door, where he found the good old man reading a book, while glancing lovingly at the mountain from time to time.

"Good evening," said the poet. "Can you give me a night's shelter?"

"Gladly," answered Ernest; and then he added, smiling. "I think I never saw the Great Stone Face look so kindly at a stranger."

The poet sat down beside him, and he and Ernest talked together. Never before had the poet talked with a man like Ernest, so wise, and gentle, and kind. Ernest, on the other hand, was moved by the mind of the poet.

As Ernest listened to the poet, he imagined that the Great Stone Face was bending forward to listen too. He gazed into the poet's eyes.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The poet laid his finger on the book that Ernest had been reading.

"You have read these poems," said he. "You know me, then, for I wrote them."

Again and again, Ernest examined the poet's features; he turned towards the Great Stone Face then back. He shook his head and sighed.

"Why are you sad?" inquired the poet.

"Because," replied Ernest, "all through life I have been waiting for someone; and I hoped that it might be you."

"You hoped," answered the poet, faintly smiling, "to find in me the likeness of the Great Stone Face. I am not worthy to be its likeness."

"And why not?" asked Ernest. He pointed to the book. "Are not those thoughts worthy?"

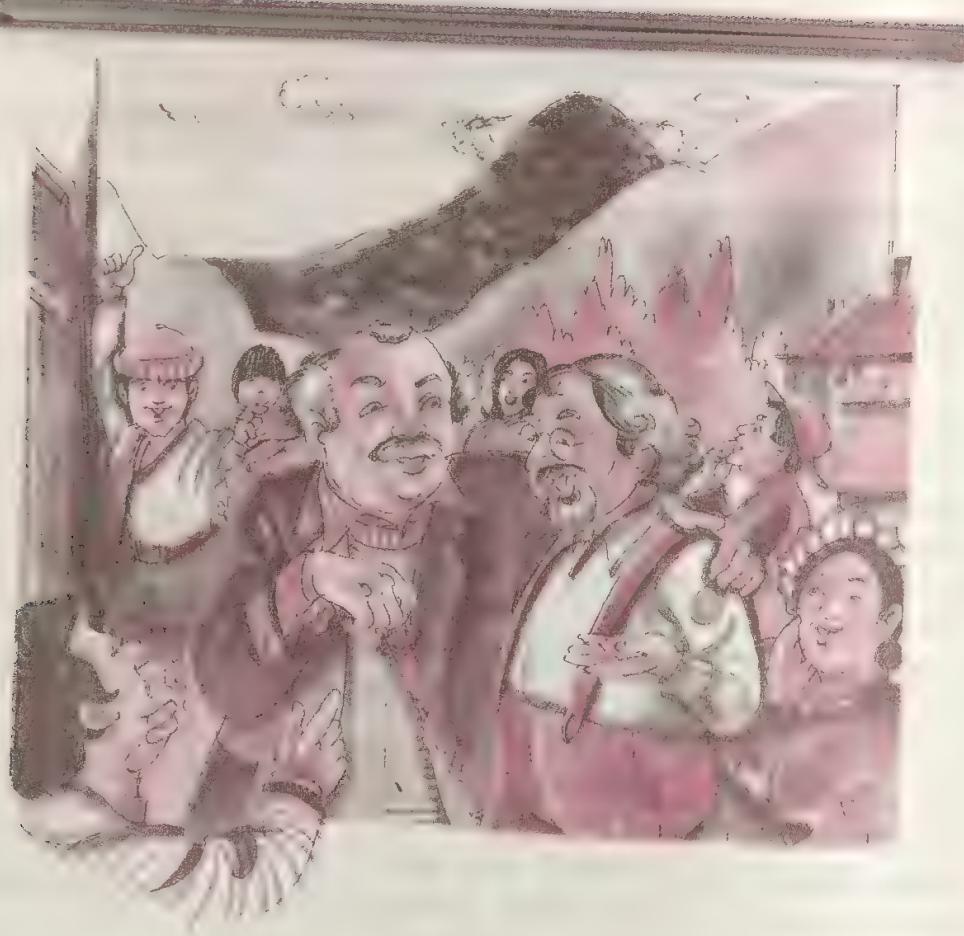
"You can hear in them the distant voice of a heavenly song. But my life, dear Ernest, has been different from my poems. I have had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams. Sometimes I lack faith in my own thoughts. Why, then, pure seeker of the good and true, should you hope to find me in the face of the mountain?"

The poet spoke sadly and his eyes were wet with tears. So, too, were those of Ernest.

At the hour of sunset, as had long been his custom, Ernest was to speak to a group of neighbours in the open air. Together he and the poet went to the meeting place, arm in arm. From there could be seen the Great Stone Face.

Ernest began to speak, giving to the people what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they agreed with his thoughts; and his thoughts had power, because they agreed with the life which he had always lived. What he uttered was not mere breath. As the poet listened, he felt that the life and character of Ernest were a nobler kind of poetry than he had ever written.

In the distance appeared the Great Stone Face, with white clouds around it, like the white hairs of Ernest. At that moment, Ernest's face took on an expression so grand that the poet was moved to throw his arms up and



shout. "Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!"

Then all the people looked, and saw that what the poet said was true. The story was completed. But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet's arm, and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some man wiser and better than himself would appear, bearing a likeness to the Great Stone Face.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE
(1804-1864)
[abridged and simplified]

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Discuss

Say 'True' or 'False' for each of the following statements, and why.

1. Ernest's words reminded people of the wise old sayings.
2. Total strangers from far away, who visited Ernest in the valley, found his face familiar.
3. The Great Stone Face confirmed Ernest's view that the poet could be worthy of its likeness.
4. When Ernest and the poet met, they respected and admired each other equally.
5. The poet along with Ernest addressed the inhabitants of the valley.
6. The poet realised that Ernest's thoughts were far nobler than his own verses.

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. How was Ernest different from others in the valley?
2. Why did Ernest think the poet was like the Stone Face?
3. What did the poet himself say about his thoughts and poems?
4. What made the poet proclaim Ernest was the Stone Face?
5. Write 'Ernest' or 'Poet', against each statement below.
 - (i) There was a gap between his life and his words. _____
 - (ii) His words had the power of truth as they agreed with his thoughts. _____
 - (iii) His words were as soothing as a heavenly song but only as useful as a vague dream. _____
 - (iv) His thoughts were worthy. _____
 - (v) Whatever he said was truth itself. _____
 - (vi) His poems were noble. _____
 - (vii) His life was nobler than all the poems. _____
 - (viii) He lacked faith in his own thoughts. _____

(ix) His thoughts had power as they agreed with the life he lived. _____

(x) Greatness lies in truth. Truth is best expressed in one's actions. He was truthful, therefore he was great. _____

6. (i) Who, by common consent, turned out to be like the Great Stone Face?

(ii) Did Ernest believe that the old prophecy had come true? What did he say about it?

WORDS IN USE

I. Mark the meaning that best fits the word/phrase in the story.

1. (sun) going down	(i) becoming smaller (ii) weakening (iii) setting
2. brightening	(i) making (it) look bright and cheerful (ii) lending (it) a special glow (iii) causing (it) to appear hopeful
3. spacious	(i) lonely and wild (ii) big and wide (iii) special and important
4. prophecy	(i) proverb (ii) prediction (iii) rumour
5. marvellous	(i) wonderful (ii) surprising (iii) shocking
6. proclaim	(i) reveal (ii) declare (iii) shout
7. cease	(i) happen (ii) stop (iii) remain
8. (a night's) shelter	(i) stay (ii) safety (iii) hospitality

9. gazed (i) wondered about
(ii) stared at
(iii) thought of

10. took on (an expression) (i) challenged
(ii) resembled
(iii) assumed

II. Look at the following words.

like - likeness
punctual - punctuality

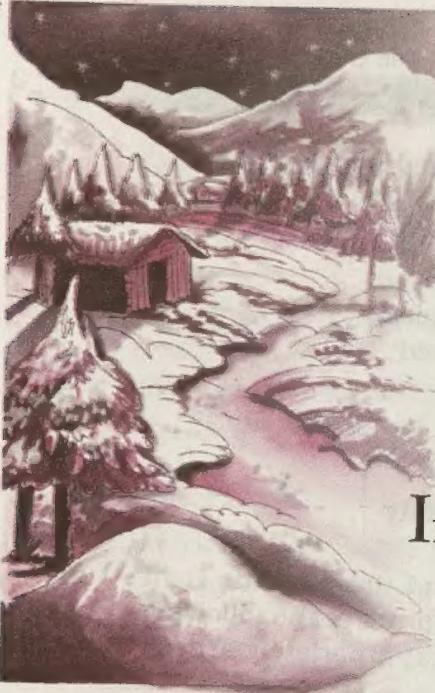
The words on the left are adjectives and those on the right are their noun forms. Write the noun forms of the following words by adding **-ness** or **-ity** to them appropriately. Check the spelling of the new words.

1. lofty	6. enormous
2. able	7. pleasant
3. happy	8. dense
4. near	9. great
5. noble	10. stable

COMPOSITION

- Read the paragraphs describing the poet with Ernest.
- Imagine that you are the poet. You belong to the valley. You have come from far away.
- Describe your first meeting with Ernest. You can begin like this:

I was born in the valley more than fifty years ago. I left the place at the age of fourteen ...



In Drear-nighted December

It is a cold gloomy night in December, but the tree and the brook appear to the poet to be happy and contented. What is the secret of their happiness? Is there a message in it for humans too?

In drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity;
The north cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

drear: dreary/gloomy/that which makes one sad and unhappy (a cold gloomy night in December) **felicity:** great happiness ('Green felicity' is suggestive of spring when the branches of the tree were laden with green leaves.) **sleety whistle:** 'Sleet' is snow or hail mixed with rain. 'Whistle' suggests the blowing of cold wind carrying rain and snow through the bare branches. **thawings:** when the snow melts ('Thawings' have been called 'frozen' suggesting extreme cold and very slow melting of ice.) **glue:** (here) prevent

In drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook,
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

JOHN KEATS
 (1795-1821)

ACTIVITIES

Write

1. The secret of the tree's happiness lies
 - (i) in its ability to enjoy the cycle of the seasons.
 - (ii) in its indifference to the seasons.
 - (iii) in its mature outlook on the ups and downs of life.

Mark the right answer.
2. (i) What is meant by "the north"?
- (ii) What does "them" in the same line refer to?
3. The tree is bare and perhaps brown in the thick of winter. How will its appearance change with the change of the season?
4. The brook, though as happy as the tree, may be missing something. What is it?

Apollo: the sun or bright sunshine (In classical mythology Apollo is the god of light.) **crystal fretting:** When the water is frozen, the brook looks like a mass of hard crystals. The period when water turned into ice was one of anxiety and unhappiness for the brook. **petting (not used often):** 'in a pet' is an idiom meaning a fit of bad temper. "Never petting" suggests showing no sign of anger or bad temper over what is past and done with.

5. Supply the missing words/phrases in the following sentences.

- _____ are to the brook what branches are to the tree.
- Green felicity is to the tree what _____ is to the brook.

6. In what way can "forgetting" be sweet?

7. "The frozen time" refers to the period

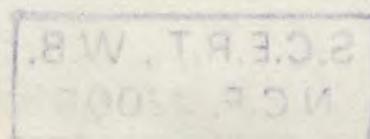
- when time stood still, as it were.
- when the brook was frozen.
- when it snowed all the time.

8. What, do you think, is the message in this poem for human beings?

Discuss

- It is not always possible to forget altogether an unfortunate or unpleasant event.
- It is necessary and desirable to forget it in the interest of peaceful living.
- 'Forget and forgive' is not a cliché. It is a practical approach to life.

For the Teacher: Notice the sequencing of ideas for discussion. Relate ideas to anecdotes and examples.



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